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JULY 99 • ISSUE 11

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KnollBear hits the afterburner to chase down *Proh* as he tries to escape.

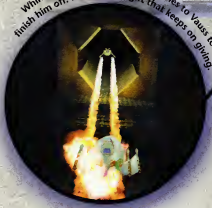
Multiplayer Tip #1
Don't deplete your afterburners cruising around. You'll need them when someone locks on a homer, or when you're trying to catch that guy in front of you. Keep it at 50% or more for that burst when you REALLY need it.



With his Gunboys positioned and ready to attack, *Solr Flare* lures *Maestro* into his deadly trap.



Big Red receives a warm welcome to the world of D3 anarchy



While *Specimen* burns, *Bama* switches to Vulcs to finish him off. Napalm, the gift that keeps on giving.



A favorite camper-hunting spot. *Sick One* catches one off-guard with a homer.

Multiplayer Tip #2
Use napalm to herd players into traps. Players have a tendency to back off from napalm bursts (with good reason). Herd them into a wall or corner and launch a frag missile into the wall next to them. The result is quick death for your opponent.

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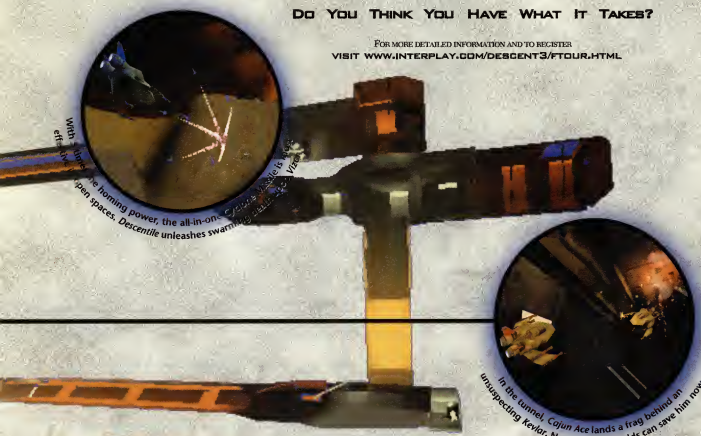
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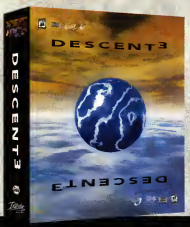
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With [illegible] effects, [illegible] homing power, the all-in-one Corvus Vulcan is [illegible] open spaces. Descentile unleashes swarm [illegible] Vauss.

In the tunnel, Cajun Ace lands a frag behind an unsuspecting Kevlar. Not even full shields can save him now.



Multiplayer Tip #3
Use Vauss as much as possible in outdoor battles so you can keep a good distance from your opponent. Use Napalm indoors whenever possible and use super lasers against opponents in small tunnels since the lasers are harder to avoid.



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PCXL UNDERCOVER

Our roaming private eye and his hot young secretary spot the hottest games you've never heard of — until now, that is. Also, check out the great games from years past that just didn't sell

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NOT WITHOUT MY FRAG

What do you get when you take three lazy editors, one now-disgruntled graphic artist, and an overdue feature? One hell of a comic book rip-off, that's what

112



STOP THE PRESSES

Quake III Test is out and we've got all the goods. Plus, we've always wanted to say "stop the presses"

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TNT2 reviewed! Find out how (or if) it compares to the Voodoo3. Plus, it's Panther versus Cyborg in a joystick duel to the death, while Goofus & Gallant show the best (and worst) way to install a 3D card

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More gratuitous cheerleader shots in our ongoing look at the college gaming leagues and Chapter 6 of PCXL's 18-part strategy guide to *Everquest* (Subtitled: Ed's Weak Excuse For Missing Deadlines)

X-TRA FOR MEN 101

Redesigned for the amino-chugging, ab-toning gaming guy, this magazine-inside-a-magazine has dating tips, the Gamescan Forum, the PCXL glossary, a very special woman we'd like to play, and much more

When we asked Production about stopping the press, they said, "Are you f—king crazy?"



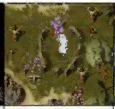
ON THE COVER

How much is too much? That's the question we asked ourselves when deciding which cover image should be used. Originally, our cover model was going to be a sexy nurse. Then she became a sexy P.I. Investigating games (to match the lead feature), but it quickly degenerated into a game of "hide the nipple" when the pictures came back (Photographer: Ed Fox, Hair/Make-up: Josef Saunders)

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Praise the Lord! And pass the ammunition



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It would be so easy to make an Elvis joke here, but we're not that desperate



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Them voxels shore are purty. Put away your accelerator for this "voxelicious" new game

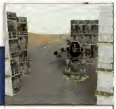
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64 STREET WARS
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67 PCXL reviews are not for the tame of heart, weak of stomach, or those who wear their hearts on their sleeves (especially if you've spent the last three years of your life developing a game made entirely of "ass")



68 MECHWARRIOR III
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74 ALIENS VS PREDATOR
Three races all beating the holy crap out of each other

76 WORMS ARMAGEDDON
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78 ROLLER-COASTER TYCOON
Learn the ups and downs of the theme park biz



80 FLEET COMMAND
Like the "Love Boat" with weapons and no wacky love triangles



83 LANDS OF LORE III
Just one score point away from actually rating itself — an industry first!



85 CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER
More *Civ* action, without that pesky Meier guy getting in the way



86 LANDER
We hoped it was about '80s sex-bomb Judy Landers, but no such luck

88 BARE ESSENTIALS
A look at expansions for *Blood II* and *The Settlers III*, plus *Team Fortress Classic*



PAMELA LEE: A FINAL TRIBUTE TO TWO OF OUR BEST FRIENDS









CELEBRITY APPEARANCES

Bill Clinton (he feels your pain .. and pleasure), Catherine Zeta Jones' butt (sooo tasty), Tiger Woods (born to putt), Rebecca Gayheart (mmm, clean pores), Katie Holmes (Go, Go, Go!), Shannon Doherty (witchy but kitsch-y), Dennis Rodman (dribbles for food), Heidi Fleiss (dribbles for money), Fable (just dribbles blood), Rebecca Romijn-Stamos (Full Blouse), Julie Newmar (purrrrfect), Shanla Twain (Tangy & Twangy), Judge Judy (Harpy in the court), Starr Jones (rude with a View), and a special tribute to Pamela Lee and her lost assets

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Just before we went to press the editorial staff flew off to LA. for E3 (the gaming convention). Mike gives his thoughts on the show, the babes, the liquor, and the industry

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Quake III: Arena — You'll wonder if Dan's been smoking Rob's crack pipe, as he compares the mighty *Quake III* to *Police Academy 4* — huh?

THE DISCS

14
Drinking, drugging, sex, loud music ... sounds like the PCXL office on deadline night. 70s pot band Fleetwood Mac comes out of the rest home to rock you with a new cover of an old classic, in tribute to our disc

Forget about the Second Coming. Prepare yourself for the THIRD.

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THE BEST KILLS ARE NOT ALWAYS ONLINE

The excitement of the Deathmatch is no longer the exclusive realm of the online gamer. Thanks to QIIIA's revolutionary artificial intelligence, the days of predictable bots are just a memory. The game's characters react like experienced gamers, and when you get gibbed, you may swear your computer is cupping itself. Single players will find that lured by level. QIIIA delivers the intensity of a live Deathmatch. Fragging your enemy is every bit as exciting, getting fragged is every bit as humiliating. You may even think twice about turning your back on your computer.







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EDITOR'S LETTER

FUTURAMA

Once a year us editor types hop on a plane and visit the Mecca of gaming, better known as E3 (or to the extremely lucky ones, "E3-some"). This year, as we drove to the airport, we optimistically thought of all the great new games, industry friends, and new selection of booth babes. On Day 1 (after a night of power drinking) we woke up early (10:30 is pretty damn early) and cabbed over to the show. Every 15 minutes we rushed to appointments with a publisher or developer who claimed to have the "best games of the show." Being jaded (not to mention hungover) we cautiously analyzed each game. Some were behind closed doors, some were gloriously displayed at the front of the booth, and some (like *Daikatana*) were hidden in a corner where, hopefully, no one would notice. Day 2, Day 3, and Day 4 were all repeats of Day 1 (although the hangover got increasingly worse). When it was all over, despite the achy backs and general feeling of nausea, we walked away feeling pretty damn good about the future of games.

Team Fortress 2, *Black & White*, *Vampire*, *Soldier Of Fortune*, *Giants*, *Freelancer*, *Amen*, *Tribes 2*, and a host of others were jaw-droppingly amazing. We are truly excited about the coming year.

It has never been a better time to be a gamer, and **PCXL** will be here to give you the scoop, and hopefully have a little fun in the process.

MIKE SALMON, *Editor in Chief*

THE TEAM

EDITOR IN CHIEF



MIKE SALMON

EMAIL → mike@pcxl.com
SHINING E3 MOMENT → *He doesn't remember, but we're sure it was grand*
FAVORITE E3 BABE → *My fiancee didn't go to E3, so there were none (Ha!)*
FAVORITE E3 GAME → *Team Fortress 2: "It may never come out, but when it does, it will be incredible"*
NOW PLAYING → *Tribes, Quake III, Red Alert, TPC Classic, and Everquest*

EXECUTIVE EDITOR



ROB SMITH

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SHINING E3 MOMENT → At the Playboy Mansion he called his girlfriend and said, "I'm with a Playmate, the Rynn model, and a bottle of 'shower milk'"
FAVORITE E3 BABE → Rynn
FAVORITE E3 GAME → *Giants*: "The hallmarks of a slightly classic"
NOW PLAYING → *Everquest, Allens Versus Predator, Quake III, Evercrack, Everass, and Quake II*

MANAGING EDITOR



PHILIP MAYARD

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SHINING "NOT AT E3" MOMENT → A disturbing late night call from Dan (when he dialed the wrong number, we hope)
FAVORITE "NOT AT E3" BABE → Leah Reich from The DEN at our "Anti E3" party
FAVORITE E3 GAME → "The one where all the editors disappear and can enjoy some peace and quiet"
NOW PLAYING → With the idea of becoming a full-time Subway store manager

SENIOR EDITOR



DAN EGGER

EMAIL → dan@pcxl.com
SHINING E3 MOMENT → Calling his girlfriend in an advanced state of inebriation, commenting on her beauty and "physical assets" (*Liar*)
FAVORITE E3 BABE → Apparently his girlfriend and her "physical assets"
FAVORITE E3 GAME → *Tribes 2*: "A few months in and it already looks incredible"
NOW PLAYING → Way, way, way too much *Everxmark*

ASSOCIATE EDITOR



ED LEE

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SHINING E3 MOMENT → Staying home and buying *Phantom Menace* tix for the rest of the staff
FAVORITE E3 BABE → Dan's girlfriend and her "physical assets"
FAVORITE E3 GAME → It was the one that was shown last year, but one milestone ahead (read: all of the above)
NOW PLAYING → *Everquest, MechWarrior 3, Team Fortress Classic, Tribes*

ASSISTANT EDITOR



CHUCK OSBORN

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SHINING E3 MOMENT → Pushing my way into the Eidos party and coveting John Romero's trophy girlfriend
FAVORITE E3 BABE → The Harley Davidson model who consented to have her picture taken with him
FAVORITE E3 GAME → *Soldier Of Fortune*: "Just watching it made me feel giddy as a schoolgirl"
NOW PLAYING → *Everspank, Quake III*

INTERN/MODEL/FASHION COORDINATOR



GIL DECARLO

EMAIL → gil@pcxl.com
SHINING E3 MOMENT → When she was mistaken for a booth babe, then proceeded to slap Todd Porter silly
FAVORITE E3 BABE → "The bartender at Eidos can serve my drink anytime"
FAVORITE E3 GAME → *Black & White*: "The little creatures were so cute, and you can make 'em poop. Kind of gross, but definitely a game I want to play"
NOW PLAYING → *Clan Baka Extreme*

ART DIRECTOR



KYLE LEBOUF

EMAIL → kyle@pcxl.com
SHINING "NOT AT E3" MOMENT → *He scored three phone numbers, more than the whole geeky crew got in LA.*
FAVORITE "NOT AT E3" BABE → Dana, the hot girl that lives in LA, who he was going to see at E3 — she had gone
FAVORITE E3 GAME → "That one where the PR girls get naked, I forget the name"
NOW PLAYING → *Tribes, Quake III Arena, Diablo I*, and anything for the Mac

ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR



ERIC SMITH

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SHINING "NOT AT E3" MOMENT → Getting in practice at sniping in *TFC Classic*
FAVORITE "NOT AT E3" BABE → "I'll also take the side road and go with my beautiful girlfriend, Anna (*Liar*)
FAVORITE E3 GAME → Well, I heard *TF2* and *Tribes 2* both looked great. but I wouldn't know since I wasn't there
NOW PLAYING → *Team Fortress Classic, Tribes, and more Team Fortress Classic*

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Thanks for joining us.

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One final note. If it's NOT a conference, it is a non-stop drinking, screaming take-fest we pass off to our bosses as a work-related conference. But it isn't easy. You try drinking, walking, flirting, and dancing 18 hours a day for four days straight. We also want to thank our new, clueless PR reps for getting us on for being incredible pains-in-our-asses. Not all of you, just the dumb ones who actually think PC Gamer was better. Crackcrookers, obviously.

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GOLD DISC WOMAN

DON'T STOP THINKING ABOUT DISC. NEVER BREAK THE DISC

This month's featured artist is '70s dinosaur band Fleetwood Mac, who holds the dubious distinction of being named the most drinkin', druggin', incestuous band in music history. Three couples with only five members? How does that work? Mmm ... incest.

Rock on Gold Disc Womon
Take your silver spoon
Dig your grove
Well it's one less challenge
Pick your game and now ploy

Woke up In the morning
See your hord drive lost and gone down
Lousy gomers pick their prey
But they never cry out loud

Well did disc moke you cry?
Moke you break down?
Shotter your illusions of demos?
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Do you know how to pick up the discs ond go home?

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- (7) RATING

DISC ONE

(D)	DRAKAN - EXCLUSIVE
(D)	MECHWARRIOR 3
(D)	TRIPLE PLAY 2000
(D)	STARSIEGE
(D)	MYTH II
(D)	EXPENDABLE
(D)	HOMM 3
(D)	TOMB RAIDER II
(D)	MICROSOFT BASEBALL 2000
(D)	DESCENT 3
(D)	EVIL CORE
(D)	SPACE BUNNIES MUST DIE
(D)	X-WING ALLIANCE

DISC TWO

	TEAM FORTRESS CLASSIC
	QUAKE III: ARENA
	TRIBES
(D)	SHADOW COMPANY
	UNREAL
	QUAKE II
(D)	RAILROAD TYCOON II
(D)	HERETIC II
(D)	STREET WARS
(D)	WORMS: ARMAGEDDON
(D)	ULTIMATE RACE PRO
(D)	LANDS OF LORE III
(D)	REDLINE
	GAMESPY
(D)	HIDDEN & DANGEROUS
(D)	ULTIMATE 8-BALL
(D)	KILLER TANK
(D)	HELL COPTER
(D)	BEATDOWN



Our disc comes with a scrolling interface, which is operated by moving the mouse over the screen. If this is too complicated or you lack the motor skills, then the bar on the left can be used as well. Click left on the mouse to select items and click left again (on the image) to return to the previous screen. If you've ever installed a game, then the rest should be elementary.

REQUIREMENTS: WINDOWS 95/98, PENTIUM 133MHZ, 32MB RAM, DIRECTX 6.0, MOUSE. 100% SOUND BLASTER COMPATIBLE CARD

THE DISC MINI-FAQ

Q: Who's the disc babe for the month?
A: That would be Sarah Michelle Gellar.

Q: Where did you say you found the people on last month's disc?
A: Again, don't ask.

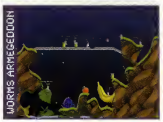
Q: What's a henway?
A: About 5 pounds.

Q: I subscribe to *PC Games*, now I get PCXL, which is a far superior publication in every way, shape and form, but now I get no disc, what gives?
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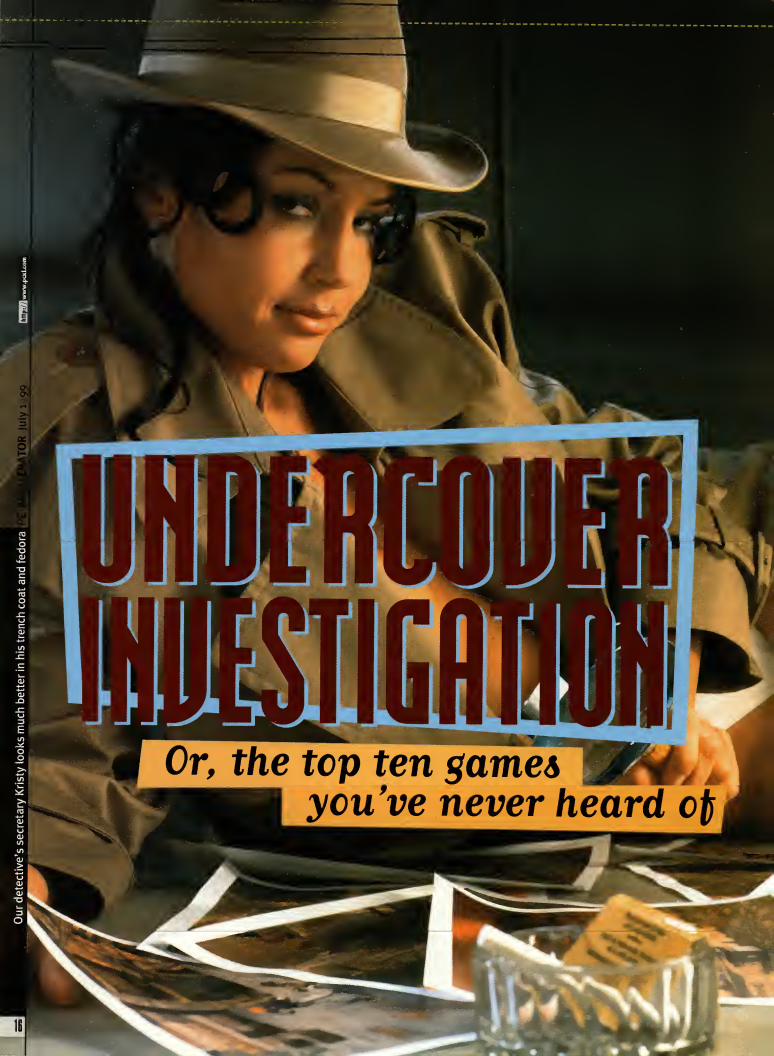
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UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATION

Or, the top ten games you've never heard of

Our detective's secretary Kristy looks much better in his trench coat and fedora



It wasn't too unusual to find a scrawled note on my desk — broads had a habit of leaving them in suspicious circumstances, then vanishing into thin air. With a casual nonchalance gained from years of practice, I spin the fedora onto the hat rack, pull out the large, beaten leather chair, settle into its well-worn shape, and lift the chaps onto the desk. I pick up the tattered parchment and inspect the hand-scrawled note. Surprise, it's another case.

Some old lady's missing cat? No. An ancient relic supposedly sporting wierdo powers gone amiss? Thankfully not. Marital infidelity, a furious dame ready to brow beat her errant husband? Ah, no. But it's not so different — just a simple investigation into the top ten PC games coming down this year. "Piece of cake," I think, smugly kicking back from the desk and letting images of *Quake III: Arena*, *Diablo II*, *C&C: Tiberian Sun*, and *Unreal Tournament* swim through my mind. Easy money, just a few days work and I'll make the broad pay through the nose. Of course, I'll tell her it's the toughest assignment I've ever had. She'll buy it. The suckers always do.











I look back at the flowing script on the note and read further. So she wants me to do some digging, but not for just the plain old top ten. There's something else going on here. I lean over and pour scotch from the cracked decanter into a stained glass. (No ice, this job calls for something a bit ... stiffer.)

"No sequels allowed?" Huh? "No franchises, no licenses." What could that mean? Let's face it, everyone in this town thrived on the franchises. My pigeon tells me that they're all the rage these days — *Franchise IV, PopulorMovie: The License*. My case is to go undercover and unearth those games that aren't sequels. My God, this broad even suggested I find games that are original, even ones that JoeSchmo LePublic hasn't been getting the beat down on for the last few months. Hell, this is gonna be tougher than I first thought. I'd better pour myself another large scotch ...

Oni

DEVELOPER --› Bungie West
PUBLISHER --› Bungie
RELEASE --› October '99

the LEAD

I started digging and one of the first names to surface through my stool pigeons was Bungie. Sure they'd had previous titles — *Marathon*, *Myth*, and *Myth II* — but nothing had really set the cash registers dinging, though the boys down at the papers sure did like what they saw. This Chicago-based outfit had expanded west, and their new operation was working on something new. I had to check it out. Despite failing to ignite mainstream passions, there was no doubt that *Myth* was a bona fide original concept. Whatever these guys worked on was worth investigation.

the EVIDENCE

Seems there's a new action hero in town — a mere slip of a thing called Konoko. Sure, she looks like a couple o' meals would do her a world of good, but she's got some sweet moves. One throw implements her talent for leaping forward, using her opponents' heads to spin around, thus twisting their necks into an unnatural position. These Japanese anime-inspired characters also wield weapons, and something meatier than the Luger I keep in the desk drawer. Technology has advanced in the year 2032, with multi-rocket launcher's firing guided missiles, while laser targeting (either a solid red line, or a pinpoint cursor) makes hitting your target much, much easier.

Oni's levels are highly detailed and are reused in a continuing plot progression. After taking over one HQ, the bad guys rally, take it back, and leave Konoko to come back to the same place, this time bullet-riddled and body-strewn. But hey, there had to be a twist, and here it is: Konoko begins as an agent of the Tech Crimes Task Force (TCTF), on the tail of a bad guy organization. When the investigations start to unearth something fishy, Konoko quits, goes rogue, and becomes more deadly.

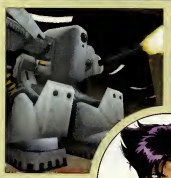
the ANALYSIS

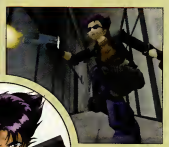
Sure, I've seen this kind of thing before, but not quite like this — that's the stamp of Bungie. This sweet young thing has a couple of friends to help out, armed with nasty moves of their own, including a back-breaking slam. We all know that fighting games and the PC haven't been the closest of friends over the years, but *Oni* could bridge that gap with the adventure and anime-stylized setting thrown in.

The level designs are taking shape (including a 15 floor HQ building) with plenty of environmental effects, characters casting shadows and detailed enemy AI routines that assess risk and damage amounts before deciding on attacking and running. Scripted events within the game engine should keep the action pacing fast and furious.

I gotta say I like the look of this kid. She's got all the right moves, the right shape, and if those levels turn out to have real style and purpose, the adventure could be a winner. Let's face it, if the dame's such a bombshell, who's not going to take notice?







Two trained architects give *Oni*'s location a realistic look.





Seemingly complex moves (jumping into a roll, then leaping with a roundhouse kick) are pulled off with simple, but precise keystrokes.







Concept renders (top) gave the artists a target to aim for.

Black and White

DEVELOPER ⇢ Lionhead Studios
PUBLISHER ⇢ Electronic Arts
RELEASE ⇢ December '99

the LEAD

Well, picking up this lead was easy. One name always crops up in this kind of case. Peter Molyneux is the boss man. His MO fits the focus of this case perfectly. He founded an organization called Bullfrog in the United Kingdom and created *Populous*, *Magic Carpet*, and *Dungeon Keeper* among others. He's the main man, who set out on his own with a new outfit called Lionhead Studios. Whether this job could live up to the grandeur that he was prone to spout was open to question. But in Molyneux's case, even if he didn't deliver what he promised, what he did deliver would make a serious impact. He couldn't be ignored.

the EVIDENCE



A title like *Black and White* sounds right up my alley. At the offset, Molyneux released to the public a hi-res image that he suggested was the target quality for the in-game graphics. I picked up these latest screenshots, and boy, does it seem like he's hit the bullseye. But let's clear up the gameplay aspect: *B&W* is a realtime strategy game where you take the role of a powerful sorcerer who's discovered the land of Eden, a place of happy little people ready to answer your every whim. Separated into tribes that represent familiar cultures, such as Japanese, Egyptian, Greek, Zulu, Cossack, and Aztec, these happy campers are your playthings. Encourage them to worship you and it increases your lifeforce. That power lets you cast spells, and since it seems there are other sorcerers in this land, taking out those rivals becomes the focus of attention.

It's all a balancing act. Different tribes supply different types of lifeforce, thus allowing different types of magic to be cast. Choose for yourself whether to be good or evil — protecting your flock and harvesting their faith, or terrifying them into a fearful worship. Also at your disposal are Titans. Time to play daddy as you pick any random creature from the world (cow, sheep, bird, etc.) and drop it into your citadel. It's gonna grow, and grow big. When fully grown, these beasts will ensure your tribes are well-behaved, either through intimidation (should it decide to do some careless stomping of civilians), or reverence (if it aids the people with their chores and wards off any threat).



Kickboxing cows and benevolent King Kongs ... you gotta love that zany Brit humor.





the ANALYSIS

I kinda get the sense I've seen elements of this before — call it the Molyneux MO. Take the God-sim style of *Populous*, the citadel-building and spellcasting of *Magic Carpet*, throw in *Dungeon Keeper*'s fostering a balanced, strategically viable stronghold, then finish with a splash of bizarre humor, and you've got an intriguing concept. The mammoth Titans are the wild card. The tribal, ahem, *Populous* lives out a proper existence — they do chores, play games, and even marry. But the real gameplay kicker is in the casting of spells requiring you to sketch out the correct pattern using the mouse. Etch out that perfect recreation of the spell symbol and its effect is more powerful. What a concept.

I gotta tell you that every Molyneux game should be investigated. *B&W* ain't no different, and in fact offers even more potential as the online component allows you to train up your Titan offline and take it online for multiplayer showdowns. A guaranteed smash hit in Molyneux's native UK, it's about time his creativity got the deserved commercial success on these shores.

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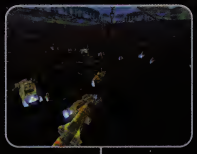
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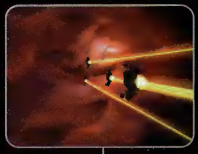
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Asheron's Call

DEVELOPER ⇢ Turbine Entertainment
PUBLISHER ⇢ Microsoft
RELEASE ⇢ November '99

the LEAD

I wasn't expecting this case to turn up a run-in with the main organization. They're dealing in the big leagues, but when they dip their toe in my paddling pool, I guess I gotta take notice. A massively multiplayer roleplaying game ain't that original. *Ultima Online* has done the business, and I hear that Verant Interactive's *EverQuest* should be investigated by the AFT (Dept. of Alcohol, Firearms, and Tobacco) as being dangerously addictive. Anything following that MO should be tracked. I was on the case in a flash, and what I found was frightening. It was hard to believe that another epidemic could be heading our way so fast. But here it was, in closed beta format, and all the danger signs were there.



AC's dungeons don't have the same polygon look of *EQ*, using D3D exclusively, natch.

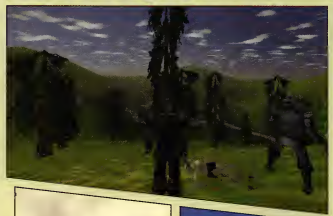
the EVIDENCE

A whole new fantasy fiction is unveiled with some schmoe named Asheron, "calling" adventurers to his land of Dereth for some fun and games with mystical creatures. But this isn't your traditional high fantasy. *AC* doesn't have elves, halflings, rangers, or druids. Instead, it's built around a skill-based system — more akin to the Rolemaster table-top RPG format, than *EQ*'s more traditional AD&D influence.

Three humanoid "races" — Aluvian, Gharu'ndin and Sho — are all that's available, and while character "classes" can be selected, they only represent how the pool of skill points has been divided among the numerous skill options, rather than limiting each character to one direction that they must follow. This gives you freedom to be anyone you choose. A combat-focused character can decide to invest new skill points to healing, or magic, but your abilities are based around six familiar stats with unfamiliar names (Focus and Self, instead of Wisdom and Intelligence).

This world you'll be traipsing around is huge, covering some 500 square miles, and inhabited by bizarre creatures. No goblins or orcs, but drudge workers and others not taken from popular fantasy lore (there are rats to accommodate all the pest control freaks out there). Portals act as save points (binding to an area) and let you flit around to different dungeons.

The current dying plan is that you lose your most expensive item and some gold (and temporarily take a skill point hit), so there's no corpse searching — it still sucks when it happens.





the ANALYSIS

Sources tell me that *AC*'s been in development for quite some time, and they've got the advantage of learning from both *UO* and *EQ*. What they learn is another matter — there's no point in being different for the sake of being different, especially if your "different" isn't as much fun. One major gameplay issue sure to make a difference to the game world politics is the allegiance. Sign up with a higher level character and your allegiance to them can get you a leg up. And then there's the power of politics. Factionalism will no doubt run rampant, as power blocks trade off numbers, with high level characters acting as monarchs. It's an intriguing concept and method of getting characters to create the thrust for their own in-game quests and adventures. I did more digging and turned up some seeds. Seems Origin's *UO* has about 130,000 people coughing up their $10 a month. *EverQuest* is adding more people to that. How many more of these crowds are out there? Guess that depends whether they like their fantasy high and traditional, or skill-based and potentially more flexible.



A radar gives all the characters a tracking skill. And, more opportunity to kill rats.



One out of left field: *Sanity* dazzled with LithTech 2's good looks.

Sanity

DEVELOPER --> Monolith
PUBLISHER --> Monolith
RELEASE --> December '99

the LEAD

This came out of left field and caught me in the eyes. Dammit, I shoulda been expecting it. Let's face it, this game kinda has a license — that LithTech engine is already on the streets. But Monolith created it, and they're using it. *Sanity* was easy on the eyes in the way that a perfect stocking line goes straight up the back of a broad's leg, heading to heaven. It needs to be checked out more thoroughly — as did *Sanity*.

the EVIDENCE

Our story here heads in to the future (no surprise). Humans have discovered that they have Psionic "Talents" and as these powers come out, they drive the Psionics nuts. It's a society on the verge of total collapse.

Nathaniel Cain is a Psionic and a good guy. His pyro-kinetic powers are incredible, but every time they are used, it drains both health and sanity. But *Sanity*'s kicker is that the combat goes deeper than straight brain-fry on brain-fry. You can slam a perp with a lightning strike, but you can also set mechanisms, whereby your response is preprogrammed. He tries this, and you've got the right reaction ready to fire back. The style is taken from the collectible card game *Magic: The Gathering*. Who knows what your enemy (or multiplayer opponent) has in store.

the ANALYSIS

LithTech 3D is maturing into an extremely flexible tool. High-quality graphics lend themselves to some incredible physical interpretations of the Psionic Talents. So long as the action remains intense, Monolith could be looking at a breakout hit.

Drakan

DEVELOPER --> Surreal Software
PUBLISHER --> Psygnosis
RELEASE --> September '99

the LEAD

I'd already heard about this kid. Feisty little number, make no mistake. Sure, people were throwing slanderous comment that the style might be reminiscent of a franchise queen, but what did they know? The dame here, a kid called Rynn, had a fresher smile and plenty of smarts. Not only that, but she had company, the kind you don't see around these parts too often: A dragon named Arokh at her beck and call. I'd like that kinda sidekick (and a piece of that broad), so I was on the case in a jiffy.

the EVIDENCE

I've seen this sort before, too. All looks and little substance usually, but this broad not only had a panache, a sylph-like frame likely to draw attention from any hot-blooded type, and a swift range of athletic maneuvers, she also had a dragon sidekick. Throwing a young dame into this kind of vengeful mission is dangerous, but those combat moves, strafing, slicing, hacking, rolling, jumping, and slashing showed that she was up to the task, leaving many enemies limbless in the process. And when she straddles Arokh (the dragon, remember?), it brings a tear to the eye.

the ANALYSIS

She's got the moves, she's got the look, she's got the muscle sidekick, and she's got the challenge. I thought her voice might have been too weak, but it belied her talents, with a range of different weapons, from sword to axe, and many more. Whether she's on that dragon, pitted against the fantasy denizens running rampage through her homeland, or up against other dragons in "deathmatch" aerial combat, the controls are showing to be tight and the action frantic in crowded skies. The dragon is a thing of beauty, and the lady ain't too bad either — ample reason to keep them safe. I just hope that her enemies show a little guile of their own, or there won't be much more to her than just a pretty face.



Dragons and feisty young ladies — a match made in my heaven.

Silver

DEVELOPER → Infogrames
PUBLISHER → Infogrames
RELEASE → September '99

the LEAD

There's always a question when Johnny Foreigner hits these shores. Nothing major, just a chill that you can never quite place. So when these French guys hit U.S. soil, I had to keep my eyes open. Word was that this *Silver* that they're hawking did the kind of things that *Final Fantasy VII* did. Sure, *FFVII* was only a small-time console operator, but it made its mark. That's instant credibility if it can be recreated in my town.

the EVIDENCE

Damn foreigners always seem to have an eye for the artsy side of things. When I scoped out this RPG, its origins from across the water were evident. Lush backgrounds, color, and a storyline to boot — and it was playing surprisingly well. This case has the hallmarks of classic high fantasy. A mythical world (Jarrah), a young, talented hero (David) and his tutor/grandfather, and an evil overlord (Silver) supply all the necessary ingredients. So when Fuge, Silver's henchman, kidnaps David's young wife Jennifer, a young man's gotta do what a young man's gotta do.

the ANALYSIS

It's an RPG where you control just one character when fighting, while the AI takes over the others. That really lends itself to comparisons with *FFVII*, which is no bad thing. So your guys are tiny at times, and there may be too much linear handholding, detracting from the adventure elements. But there is plenty of style. Not a neat jacket and polished chaps, but rounded 3D characters on beautifully drawn backdrops. And *Silver*'s tale is right out of the familiar top draw of high fantasy: Good guys against bad, with vast numbers of side characters to unearth, mini-quests to fulfill, and an ultimate evil to confront.



The detailed look is supported by a full orchestral score.





Max Payne

DEVELOPER → Remedy Entertainment
PUBLISHER → GOD
RELEASE → Spring 2000

the LEAD

Who hasn't heard of *Max*? He's been shooting his mouth off for a while, but all of a sudden gone quiet. It's usually a sign of a one-way trip to the morgue, but not this time. *Max* has the support of the biggest big guy of them all — in name at least. I'm still waiting on the miracles, but *Max* can probably stand all on his own.

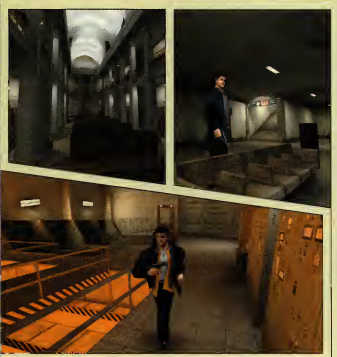
the EVIDENCE

Now here's a concept I can sink my PI teeth into. New York, a new drug called Valkyr, an epidemic of dependency, the mob — the ingredients are all there for a gritty thriller. Max Payne was a victim — his family slaughtered Charles Bronson *Death Wish*-style. After going deep undercover, where the mobsters look all the more menacing, your best friend (and only witness to your being undercover) is murdered. And, the finger is pointed at you.

Finnish outfit Remedy impressed 3D Realms enough for them to get involved in the project, and the newer screenshots are the best Scandanavian import since ABBA, uhh ... I mean the Swedish Bikini Team.

the ANALYSIS

Max's third-person perspective is designed to get you involved in the deep, comic book-style plot line. Remedy's aiming for a high-end look, meaning *Max* is 3D-accelerated only. It's going to be open-ended to some degree, with elements of the *Max*-FX engine released after shipping. Remedy is aiming for a fully interactive world (in the vein of 3D Realms' *Duke Nukem*). The plot is so compelling that the movie rights are being pitched in Hollywood. Let's hope the game gets finished first.



Max – an industry barometer for how gamers react to storylines?



The resident evil in *Nocturne* move with highly detailed motion.

Nocturne

DEVELOPER --› Terminal Reality
PUBLISHER --› GOD
RELEASE --› Halloween '99

the LEAD

When the massive Microsoft Corp. banged on the door of TRI to work on their first major gaming projects, I took notice. Those first jobs didn't score them the kind of respect they'd hoped, but there was obviously plenty-more talent than those initial offerings (including *Hellbender*) suggested. Now, armed with a new engine, and a concept lending itself to similarities with horror classic *Resident Evil*, it seems time for TRI to stand up and be counted among the elite of the development world.

the EVIDENCE

Exhibit A: The technology. A vastly impressive engine, sporting amazing mirroring techniques, as well as an animation system that let a flowing coat sway gently in any breeze. Exhibit B: The gameplay. A bit more difficult to unearth, but as *Nocturne* approaches its planned Halloween launch, the evidence is beginning to surface.

There are four missions, each dominated by either vampires, werewolves, zombies, or the reanimated dead. It's not an action-based slaughterfest, as many of the creature specific weapons are well hidden, requiring careful manipulation of the environments to set traps, and the use of guile to make progress. It's also dark — each weapon has a torch attachment — with eerie shadows setting the scene for a variety of heart-pounding moments. I can feel the hairs on the back of my neck rising.

the ANALYSIS

My concerns about how the technology would be used in gameplay are subsiding. These kids have been putting in the hours setting the scene for a frightening horror game experience. Even the use of FMV for the opening movies can't dampen the sense of foreboding that the supernatural creatures exude. This is a genuine spine-chiller in the making.

Blade

DEVELOPER --› Rebel Act
PUBLISHER --› Infogrames
RELEASE --› December '99

the LEAD

Most relationships (so my years of experience tell me) begin with a fleeting glance. If something sparkles in the eye, then you know you've got to look closer. That's what happened when I stumbled on *Blade*. Spanish outfit Rebel Act has been working on their 3D technology for some time now, shaping it to fit a third person combat-based RPG. It looked like a beauty, with shadows cast from numerous glowing light sources, bringing an ominous style to the dungeon environments. But like every good investigator, you have to look under the surface.

the EVIDENCE

A story steeped in high fantasy concepts certainly ain't gonna win any originality awards, but it's a decent premise. An ancient hero, *Blade*, had a sword that wounded a mighty dragon. Whoever owns the sword controls the dragon, and the evil mage Dal Gurak is on the case, discovering one of the five hidden keys that keep the sword locked away.

Now you must, in the guise of an Amazon, Dwarf, Barbarian, or Knight, survive 17 grueling missions that encompass wide outdoor areas, castles and dungeons, to thwart the mage's plans to seize the sword and control the dragon, due to wake from its healing slumber.

the ANALYSIS

Numerous weapons for the four different character classes can be used in five different offensive and defensive movements. They each sport a wild class-specific special ability. That's in addition to being able to pick up and use any of some 300 different objects ranging from barrels to tables, and clubs to lamps. That variation could go a long way to providing a unique, immersive adventure.



With a strong punch, *Blade*'s positioned to be a sleeper hit.



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Shiver me timbers me old scrawny matey sea dog types. Let's swash a buckle and buckle up the swashes for there's some gold to be found, and just me 'n' thee to find it. Yes. Indeed.

Galleon

DEVELOPER --› Confounding Factor
PUBLISHER --› Interplay
RELEASE --› Spring 2000

the LEAD

Let me tell you a little story. Once upon a time there was a little developer called Core Design. They were small time — no major successes, no major catastrophes, just a bit player. Then they launched a little number called *Tomb Raider*, starring a delectable dame called Lara Croft. And a phenomenon was born. The two characters responsible for that game, lead artist and designer Toby Gard and lead programmer Paul Douglas, then bailed out to do their own thing. They didn't give this PI the slip — I discovered them living it large as the head honchos of a new outfit called Confounding Factor.

the EVIDENCE

Let's face it, we all know that Lara needs a facelift (in the engine department, not the plastic surgery). Well, seems these boys are heading in that direction with another third-person action adventure. Archaeology has been dumped in favor of sea-faring, following the adventures of a legendary mariner by the name of Captain Rhama Sabrier. These boys can do 3D, and, unrestricted by the confines of stringent marketeers protective of their hottest commodity, there's the real chance for some adventure to shine. So across the oceans Rhama will travel as he tries to unravel the mystery of a ship discovered by a famous Healer.

the ANALYSIS

Hey, no doubt Lara's a tough act to follow, but nobody's more aware of it than Confounding Factor. Lush 3D environments and a highly detailed control scheme that lets the Captain pull off a wide array of stunts, while fighting enemies that exhibit a keen sense of self-preservation. It's certainly gonna be tough to top the games industry's wet dream of the last four years, but in gameplay terms, *Galleon* should certainly eclipse its famous forebear.

Case closed...

It was a tough case, but I knew I could find ten games that weren't part of some larger franchise. Seems like the marketers have the toughest job now: Selling "good game" concepts instead of sequel numbers, names, and mainstream licenses. So why did I dig these ten out? Just to show that there are good games out there that Johnny Gamesplayer should be aware of which aren't *Quake III: Arena*, *C&C2*, or *Diablo II*. Sure, they're gonna be hot titles, but how 'bout this: If you buy one game this fall, buy *Quake III: Arena*. But if you buy two, think about some of the options I dug up here.

Hey, I'll let you know if they live up to their potential in the final assessment, but there's a fair to middling chance that you ain't gonna be disappointed with any of them.



THE PC X/L-FILES

Gaming's Unexplained Mysteries



The first subject, *System Shock*, was the direct ancestor of games like *Half-Life* and *Unreal*.



Incubation follows the exploits of space marines — further proof that alien life exists and should be cruelly destroyed at all costs.



Battlezone is one of the few classic remakes that can stand alone on its own merits.



Uprising is another example of being the right game released at the wrong time.



Let's face it ... if a gun this size won't sell *Shogo*, then nothing will.

WASHINGTON D.C.
11:27AM THURSDAY

The manila folder dropped on my desk with a thud. "The higher-ups want you to check this out," intoned FBI Assistant Director Smith mysteriously. "Watch your back and trust no one."

The folder contained pictures of games ... good ones, too. They each vanished from the sales charts without a trace. What happened to them? The events of human history are filled with moments of surprise — random acts of unpredictability — but nobody could anticipate the abduction of critical favorites from retail shelves, only to see them reappear in bargain bins mere months later.

My mission is clear: To know the unknown. If you see any of these suspects at large, they are still worth approaching with caution. As they say on TV, the truth is out there.

WASHINGTON D.C.
11:36 AM THURSDAY
X/L-FILES OPENED...

SYSTEM SHOCK

DEVELOPER --› Looking Glass
PUBLISHER --› Origin
INTELLIGENCE --› Picture the scenario: Amidst the mindless 3D shooting game invasion of 1994 comes the thinking man's shooter. It was the first of its kind, allowing you to look up and down, solve complex puzzles, analyze targeted foes, and generally do things that are taken for granted in modern games.
DEBUNKED--› Origin was known for its *Ultimo* series, not 3D shooters. And while the graphics were some of the best seen that year, the game's sci-fi sterile look may have turned off gamers used to the rough and rowdy play of *Doom II* and its ilk.

INCUBATION

DEVELOPER --› Blue Byte
PUBLISHER --› Blue Byte
INTELLIGENCE --› Very loosely based on the *Battle Isle* universe, *Incubation* is a turn-based strategy game of tactical combat in which the player controls a squad of space marines attempting to suppress an alien invasion. Considering its rich graphics and good reviews, the game should have flown off the shelves.
DEBUNKED--› The only thing that flew was the chance for a sequel (although there is an expansion pack available). Blame *Incubation*'s lack of name recognition or similarity to *X-Com Apocalypse*, but most likely the realtime strategy craze had overshadowed its turn-based cousin, leaving this game unexplored.

BATTLEZONE

DEVELOPER --› Activision
PUBLISHER --› Activision
INTELLIGENCE --› A pseudo-remake of the classic arcade game, *Battlezone* puzzled critics by being astoundingly good, yet almost universally ignored by the gaming public. Tank action games are popular, so why not this game?
DEBUNKED --› Even working the nostalgia angle couldn't save this game from the bargain rack. While consumers expected (and got) updated, but simple gameplay, predictions of *Battlezone* repeating *Frogger*'s success hurt its chances with serious gamers. Word of mouth may help the upcoming sequel.

UPRISING

DEVELOPER --› Cyclone Studios
PUBLISHER --› 3DO
INTELLIGENCE --› It would be easy to say "see *Battlezone*" and leave it at that. After all, they both bridge the action and strategy genres and were released around the same time. But *Uprising* emphasized realtime strategy such as managing resources, building structures, and deploying troops, as much as it did action.
DEBUNKED--› At least *Battlezone* had name recognition. The truth is that *Uprising* was released when several other tank and mech games were also released, many of them to good reviews. Not being a sequel or license-based property may have doomed it to be an also-ran, when it should have been a frontrunner.

SHOGO

DEVELOPER --› Monolith
PUBLISHER --› Monolith
INTELLIGENCE --› Based on the Lithtech engine, *Shogo* was a first-person shooter/mech hybrid, highly anticipated and hyped by the critics, which totally fizzled. It had an anime-inspired storyline and original gameplay. What happened?
DEBUNKED--› *Shogo* bombed because it stood out a little too much. Is it a mech game or a first-person shooter? It's neither and both, and the confusion was enough to ward off fans of both camps.



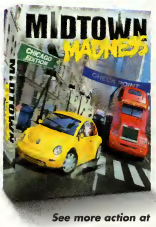
0-60 (off a skyscraper)? Yes.

Rocers, stort your moyhem. Grob hold of one of 10 wild vehicles ond roce through the windy streets of Chicago, where you'll hove to deol with tough opponents, alleywoys, drawbridges, newspaper racks, tunnels, ond the police. Throw in five race modes and over 50 city londmarks, ond there ore plenty of sights to see. Just don't drive like o tourist.









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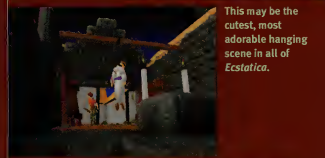
Microsoft



If your game were ignored, you would look as unhappy as the *Terra Nova* guy.



Die By The Sword could have done better had Interplay used the "Monty Python's The Knights Who Say Ni!" license.



This may be the cutest, most adorable hanging scene in all of *Ecstatica*.



Playing *Myth* is a little like spending a week in William Wallace's Fantasy Camp.



Worms and warfare make almost as much sense as Lemmings and puzzles ... oh, never mind.

Gabriel Knight has it all — voodoo and zombies. What more could you need?



TERRA NOVA

DEVELOPER --> Looking Glass
PUBLISHER --> Looking Glass
INTELLIGENCE --> *System Shock* may get its official sequel, but *Terra Nova* is its first spiritual one. Basic design and controls are similar, but its futuristic story of an elite group of soldiers defending against pirate attacks, along with *C&C*-ish strategy, give it a distinct personality.
DEBUNKED --> Besides the burden of a tough learning curve, *Terra Nova* required a high-end system (circa 1996) and failed to ship with multiplayer support. Looking Glass made games that critics loved, but left most of the game-buying public saying a collective, "Huh?"

DIE BY THE SWORD

DEVELOPER --> Treyarch
PUBLISHER --> Interplay
INTELLIGENCE --> Innovation doesn't guarantee success, as Interplay learned with *Die By The Sword*. This 3D dungeon crawler sports a control mechanism that allows complete freedom of weapon movement and location-specific damage. To put it another way, the player could hack off an opponent's arm or leg and then beat them senseless with their own appendage. That's gameplay!
DEBUNKED --> The terrible title and initially awkward control scheme reminded potential buyers that this game was not set in a tomb and most certainly did not star a hopping harlot with more cleavage than clothes. Not wholly original and not quite a clone, *DBTS* unfortunately never found an audience.

ECSTATICA

DEVELOPER --> Psygnosis
PUBLISHER --> Psygnosis
INTELLIGENCE --> Using 3D characters composed of ellipses, this action/adventure's deceptively colorful look belies its dark and violent subject matter. The nightmares of a young girl come to life and your job is to wake her up before they get out of hand ... or die trying.
DEBUNKED --> *Ecstatica*'s look and subject matter had the stench of "quirky European game," which may have scared off the American audience. With its cutesy graphics, *Ecstatica* looked more like a kid's game than a macabre horror title.

MYTH

DEVELOPER --> Bungie
PUBLISHER --> Bungie
INTELLIGENCE --> *Myth* is a fantasy realtime strategy game about the age-old epic struggle between good and evil. As commander of the forces of Light, you lead your troops into some of the bloodiest battles ever seen in an RTS. Gore and strategy should've been a match made in gaming heaven.
DEBUNKED --> Ironically, having a name similar to the best-selling game on the planet may have been a strike against *Myth* even before its release. And those not confused by the *Myth*/*Myst* parallel were probably dissuaded by the ultra-high difficulty and clunky interface. While the problems were corrected in a patch, it came too late to make a difference in sales.

WORMS

DEVELOPER --> Team 17
PUBLISHER --> Ocean
INTELLIGENCE --> An action/strategy/puzzle hybrid, *Worms* has developed a strong cult following. You assemble platoons of worms, arm them, and then let them battle it out against other worms in a 2D landscape. While it may sound silly, fans swear by it.
DEBUNKED --> Console gamers may have developed a high tolerance for anthropomorphic animal games, but PC aficionados like to think they're above that kind of kiddy fare, even if their perception doesn't match reality. And let's face it, any game starring cartoony grenade-launching nightcrawlers would never be taken seriously by "mature" PC gamers.

GABRIEL KNIGHT: SINS OF THE FATHER

DEVELOPER --> Sierra
PUBLISHER --> Sierra
INTELLIGENCE --> Famous for its *King's Quest* and *Space Quest* series, Sierra took a chance by releasing a gothic title about a New Orleans-based bookstore owner whose family lineage destines him to become an occult warrior. While popular enough to warrant two sequels, the original is often overlooked as a trailblazer in horror games.
DEBUNKED --> A scary game from the same guys that make the *Leisure Suit Larry* series? That's what confused gamers asked back in 1994. Luckily, the character survived to appear in a highly regarded sequel that cemented the *Gobriel Knight* series as a force that could not be ignored.

The Worst Games That Everybody Played

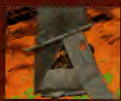
Game reviewers can cry, beg, and plead, but sometimes the most well-intentioned warnings of extreme zestitude fall on deaf ears. Here are the most craptacular games ever to become fixtures on the top ten sales charts.



The Seventh Guest

DEVELOPER→ Trilobyte
PUBLISHER: Trilobyte

If you purchased a CD-ROM drive when they were first released, it's likely that you've played this game. *The Seventh Guest* was the first true killer app for the new-fangled storage device, actually prompting people to buy one just to play it. Grainy video of terrible actors? Yowza! Base-10 logic puzzles with pretty graphics? Woo-hoo! This game was like taking an SAT while watching the *Zopruder* film.



Rebel Assault

DEVELOPER→ LucasArts
PUBLISHER: LucasArts

Speaking of buying CD-ROM drives just to play a game, *Rebel Assault* capitalized on its fans' hunger for fresh *Star Wars* footage and gave it to them. But CD technology gave game developers the idea that the convergence of movies and games meant that FMV would be the wave of the future. It wasn't, and this game is a shining example why.



Myst/Riven

DEVELOPER→ Cyan
PUBLISHER: Broderbund

While *Seventh Guest* and *Rebel Assault* sold a lot of CD-ROM drives, *Myst* became the ultimate "multimedia" application. Staying in the top ten for years, when most rise and fall in a matter of months, *Myst* became the Zsa-Zsa Gabor of games — famous for being famous and nothing else. It's the equivalent of a coffee-table book that people buy to appear sophisticated, but never read for enjoyment.



Redneck Games

DEVELOPER→ Xatrix
PUBLISHER: Interplay

Covering the gamut of the *Redneck Rampage* series and its evil twin, *Redneck Deer Huntin'*, this series may have seemed like a funny idea way back in the day. But without a decent game to back it up, even the most novel ideas can fall flat on its face. We hope we've seen the last of this series, but a small twinge of apprehension goes through us whenever a new Interplay press release arrives.



'Nam

DEVELOPER→ TNT Team
PUBLISHER: GT Interactive

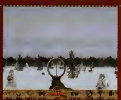
What do you get when you take a DOS-based, three-year old game engine (read: ancient) and make a budget title based on one of the most painful and embarrassing conflicts in American history? A top seller! As unbelievable as it sounds, discount store Rambos bought this game in droves, while ignoring far superior, better designed shooters.



Rebellion

DEVELOPER→ LucasArts
PUBLISHER: LucasArts

It's hard to blame gamers for this one. *Rebellion*, a realtime/turn-based strategy game set in the *Star Wars* universe, was a long-overdue concept, and should've been great. But ham-handed execution and one of the worst interfaces seen anywhere dashed the hopes of all but the most loyal and patient young Jedis. However, we do blame gamers for buying more copies of *Rebellion* than *Jedi Knight*.



Deer Hunter

DEVELOPER→ Sun Storm
PUBLISHER: Wizard Works

What began as a novelty title for good ol' boys single-handedly created its own genre juggernaut. Nobody seemed to notice or care that waiting hours for a tiny pixelated deer to shove an antler your way was an experience that only an orange-vested drunks could appreciate. Oh wait, that's who bought the game. That explains everything.



Frogger

DEVELOPER→ Hasbro
PUBLISHER: Hasbro

Last, but certainly least, a game that defines how mediocrity is the source of all evil. Not content to be an updated remake to one of the most popular videogames of all time, *Frogger* actually made us appreciate the original even more, because of its excruciating control and tedious level design. Doesn't one of the signs of the coming apocalypse have something to do with frogs?

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TOTAL ANNIHILATION™

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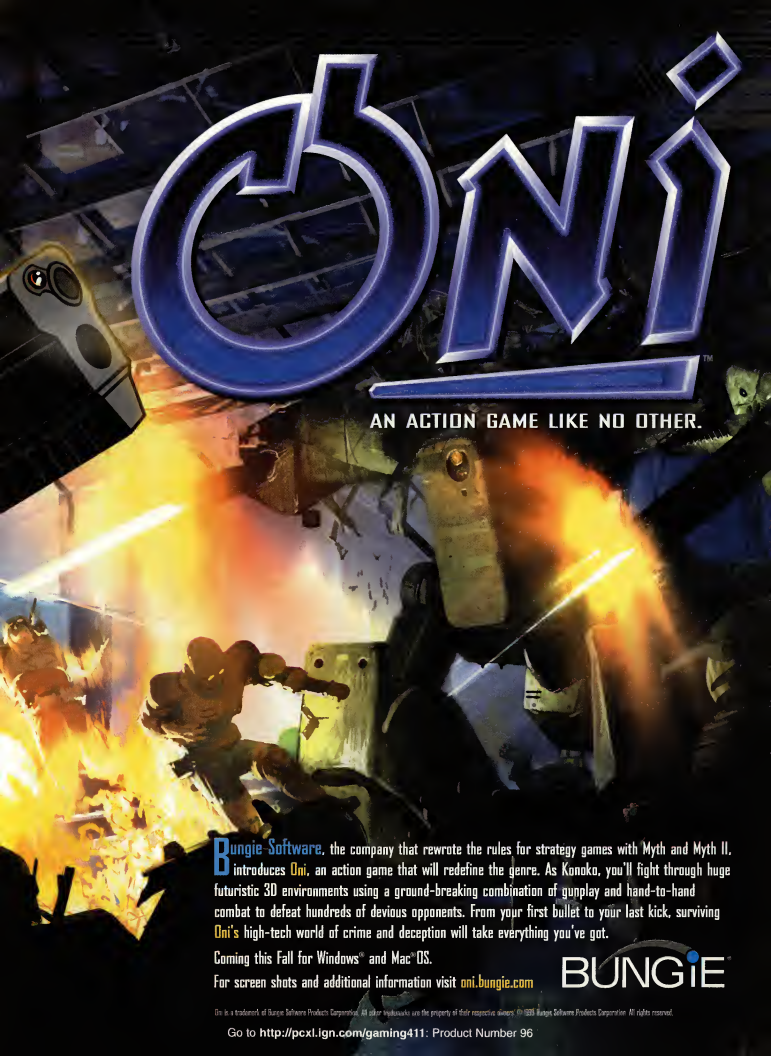
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IS TO AVENGE HER PAST.



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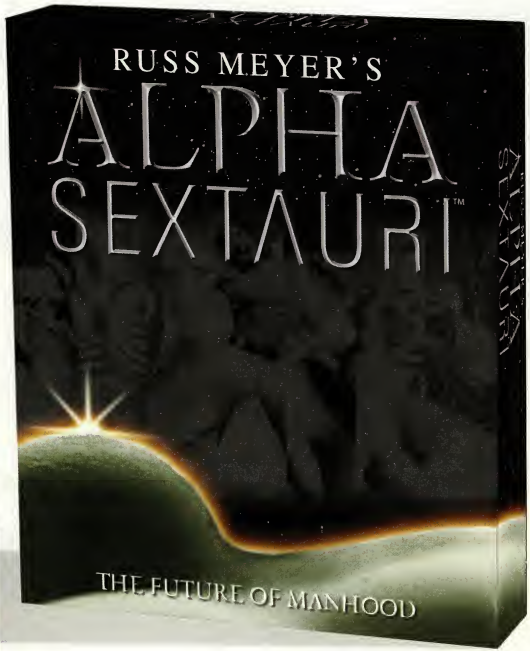
"Better than sex, not that we'd know"
— PC Gamer

"A new paradigm in sexploitation gaming"
— Next Generation

"Girls scare us"
— Strategy Games Pamphlet Plus

"Put Russ Meyer's name on a box of crap and we'd still buy it. Then again, we buy a lot of crap."
— Computer Gaming Planet

"Civilization meets Deep Throat"
— TIME Magazine





Control is crucial in making your turn last – try thinking of baseball or Madeline Albright

FURR-AXIS GAMES

MULTIPLAYER MADNESS ON SCAM PLAYER.COM

EXPLOITATION ARTS

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©1999 Geared for the times, Russ Meyer's films wield the double-bladed axe of satire, cutting and hacking their way to the very bone of society, laying bare and exposing, with great candor, the frailties, weaknesses, and strengths of its citizens. These are pictures born to entertain — shocking in their frankness, yet hilariously funny in their delivery. They are a cinematic smorgasbord of erotic fantasy, with the most BOUNTIFUL women, served up from the lusty table of Russ Meyer.





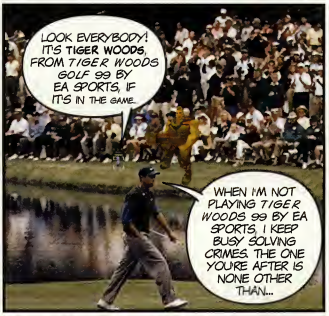






Any reference in this feature to persons living or dead is purely coincidental


NOW I NEED ME A SIDEKICK.
DAMN, THEM SIDEKICK IS SMALL!
DOWN HERE CHIEF
UP YOURS! HOW ARE WE GONNA FIND OUT WHOS OFFIN THE PRESIDENT?
HEY LEAVE IT TO ME!


LOOK EVERYBODY! IT'S TIGER WOODS, FROM TIGER WOODS GOLF 99 BY EA SPORTS, IF IT'S IN THE GAME.
WHEN I'M NOT PLAYING TIGER WOODS 99 BY EA SPORTS, I KEEP BUSY SOLVING CRIMES. THE ONE YOU'RE AFTER IS NONE OTHER THAN...


...THE DEER FROM DEER HUNTER
DRAT.
I HATES THEM DEER
THERE HE GOES. LET'S GET HIM


WHERE'D THAT DAMN DEER GO TO!
WELCOME TO EVERQUEST, WOULD YOU LIKE TO BUY A PAIR OF PATCHWORK LEATHER BOOTS?
Gylewyn
Holly Windstalker
HEY BABY
Sidekick
I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO KILL HARMLESS DEER IN MY REALM!


AFTER MUCH BUTT WHOOPIN'
MY ELVEN SPLEEN! I CAN'T FEEL MY ELVEN SPLEEN!
AUCTION: ONE CAN OF WHUPASS. PRICE? FREE!
I JUST WENT UP TO LEVEL 3 IN BUTTWHOOPIN. THERE GOES THAT DEER
Gylewyn


IN THE FROZEN WORMS LAND
AAGGHH!!
Sidekick
100
OH DEAR.
WAR IS HAYLL!













In the original draft of the script, the sidekick was to be a resurrected Jedi Master

Advancing the Front Lines...

BATTLE



Battlezone Critical Acclaim:

Action Game of the Year

CGW and PC Games

PC GAMES A LIST

"...a fantastic gaming experience."

CGW

CG RATED

93%

Editor's Choice Award

PC Gamer

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

Action Game of the Year Runner-Up

Strategy Game of the Year Runner-Up

Game of the Year Runner-Up

PC Gamer

PANDEMIC

Coming Soon To

SoftwareForPCs.com

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Be prepared to alter your plan of attack as intelligent A.I. learns as it racks up kills. Risk it all in highly-evolved Instant Action and Instant Strategy modes.



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Coordinate full-scale attacks as morphing 3-D units, destructible terrain, and incredible explosion and weapon effects intensify the killer gameplay.

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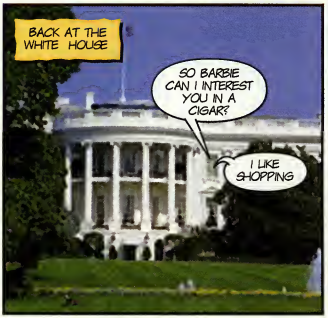

THE SERVER IS NOT RESPONDING.
WHAT THE--?


DAMN BARBIE, YOU'RE LOOKIN' FINE WOMAN
TRY BARBIE FASHION DESIGNER BY MATTEL ELECTRONICS
HMM, THIS REMINDS ME OF THE TIME...


I LIKE CAVORTING WITH MY PET DEER
WHY IS HER PET DEER SAYING "BAAA"?
BAAAA
HEY, ISN'T THAT THE NOXEMA GIRL?


TESTOSTERONE BOY SLOWLY WAKES UP IN AN OLD LIBRARY...
SOLVE THIS PUZZLE TO GET OUT
$Y=_1Z^2\frac{(X-4)5}{Y-2}$
YOU HAVE 5 MINUTES
WHERE AM I?


MATH IS HARD.
OW.
WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH GAMES?


BACK AT THE WHITE HOUSE
SO BARBIE CAN I INTEREST YOU IN A CIGAR?
I LIKE SHOPPING



If you can identify all the party guests, send the list to toonuchimeonmyhands@pcxl.com

IF YOU WANT TO FRAG IN 16.7 MILLION COLORS TURN ON THE POWER



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- Check out www.atitech.com for history-making news on RAGE FURY and the latest 32-bit true color 3D games



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STB VELOCITY 4400 (RIVA TNT) — 46 fps

STB VOODOO 3 3000 — Not Supported

DIAMOND MONSTER FUSION (BANSHEE) — Not Supported

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JOYFUL STICKS

Two new joysticks get manhandled by the staff

If you thought we were talking about anything else, you're one sick puppy

MAD CATZ PANTHER DX

The Cat With 2 Hats

PRICE --> $49.00 SRP

BUNDLE --> Full version of *Red Baron 3D*

If you remember the review of last month's trackball/flight stick combo, the Panther XL, we considered it to be extremely well-built and functional, but as a plain joystick, not very useful in flight sims. Since the DX is the XL sans trackball, that was a bit of an unintentional foreshadowing.

The DX isn't a bad stick. It's just not an exceptionally good one. And the worst thing is that it really seems like it *ought* to be really great. The plastic body feels solid, the heavy metal base gives good support (though with the same big footprint as its XL brother). The buttons are responsive and plentiful (four on the stick and five on the base), but overall this stick disappoints.

The trouble is with its so-called ergonomic design. You really need to have a fat meaty paw to get the most out of this stick. Normal-sized people may find themselves reaching for the top buttons, and so the shape becomes uncomfortable after extended play, with the fourth button unnaturally located in the pit of the pinkie. The dual hats are interesting, but redundant, unless you are playing a game with built-in support (like, say, the bundled copy of *Red Baron 3D*), though each direction can be programmed to perform any other in-game function. But without its trackball, the DX is just a neutered kitty.



RATING 6



RUH-ROH! MAY GIVE YOU PAWS

SCOOBY DOO EQUIVALENT --> **Scooby**

Pluses

--> Sturdy build
--> Plenty o' buttons
--> Dual USB; joystick port connector

Minuses

--> Ergo-painful
--> Two hands a must
--> Stealth pinkie button

SAITEK CYBORG STICK 2000

A stick for all seasons

PRICE --> $29.95 SRP

BUNDLE --> None



If The Sharper Image sold joysticks, this would be the one clogging its shelves. Its high-tech look has "gadget" written all over it. From its futuristic head right down to the gleaming metal spring at its base, the stick does its best to live up to its cyborg moniker.

Lefties have a real reason to celebrate: A mini-wrench that snaps onto the base allows you to swivel the head, move the location of the throttle handle, and convert the handle grip from right-handed to southpaw. Even if you're not left-handed, the ability to customize your own ergonomic comfort zone is an attractive feature.

Except for one glaring flaw, the stick is well-designed and comfortable, regardless of your hand-ual orientation. The buttons have a crisp feel and, though the body is lightweight, you won't have to tape it down when in use. But here's the thing ... there just aren't enough buttons. Four buttons (all on top, none on the base) are not enough for many games, especially flight sims — though there is a comfortable hat switch. A few more buttons on the base (to the side of the level-style throttle) would've added functionality without taking away its adjustability (though you can find those buttons on its sibling, the Cyborg 3D stick). But for action-gaming lefties, the Cyborg 2000 is the stick to beat.

RATING 7



COOL, BUT GOOFY LOOKIN'

SCOOBY DOO EQUIVALENT --> **Shaggy**

Pluses

--> Unique design
--> Works for lefties
--> Customizable

Minuses

--> Only four buttons
--> No handle rotation
--> Looks like an avant garde sex toy

GOOFUS & GALLANT

"How to Install a 3D Card"

LONG BEFORE BART AND LISA SIMPSON, THERE WAS GOOFUS AND GALLANT. OUR FAVORITE *HIGHLIGHTS FOR CHILDREN* ROLE MODELS MAY HAVE GROWN UP, BUT THEY'RE STILL WILLING TO SHOW US THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF 3D CARD INSTALLATION, COURTESY OF THE PCXL PLAYERS.



Gallant carefully opens the box, making sure that the instructions, installation CD, and 3D card are prudently separated from the discarded packaging.



Goofus rips open his box, and throws everything away except the 3D card. What a foolish boy!

3D Geek NEWS

The Hardware News That Affects Gamers...
...and Their Porn Download Times

WICKED3DOA

In what may be a domino effect inspired by 3Dfx's decision to market its own hardware, Metabyte has discontinued its line of Wicked3D graphics accelerator boards, choosing to focus on software development instead.

"We feel that it would be much more beneficial for the industry, and for us, if we concentrate on doing what we do best — and that is to develop software technology and allow others to bring it to market," said Wicked3D General Manager, Steve Gleitsmann.

Maybe Metabyte's PGC technology, allowing parallel processing between any two 3D cards, has finally found a sugar daddy. Metabyte assures Wicked3D owners that their boards will be supported, but this might be a good time to start shopping for an upgrade anyway.



MERGE THIS

Speaking of 3Dfx and hardware, the planned merger between 3Dfx and STB seems to have run into a brick wall. Originally scheduled for completion by April, both companies decided to take the issue back to their stockholders before moving forward.

The 3Dfx/STB marriage will not only allow 3Dfx a way to manufacture its own hardware boards indefinitely, but also give them an opportunity to enter the financially sweet OEM market. Though at the same time, this merger will limit the chipsets use to their own boards, preventing companies such as Diamond and Creative from beating the 3Dfx drum, as happened with the original iterations of the Voodoo chipset.

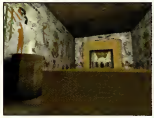
The issue almost certainly will be resolved by the time you read this, but if the merger doesn't go through, look for 3Dfx to be on the prowl for a new hardware partner.

SAVAGE SUPPORT

Bouncing back from their rep as a 3D card joke (courtesy of the Virge chip), S3 is getting widespread industry support for its new S3 texture compression technology. Over 50 developers have plans to use S3TC in their upcoming games, including *Quake III: Arena* and *Unreal Tournament*.

S3TC compresses graphical data up to one-sixth of its original size, allowing for higher resolution textures and better image quality. And since Microsoft has decided to use S3TC as the basis for its DXTn technology in DirectX, licensing it to other 3D card manufacturers may become more than a pipe dream for S3.

If you want to try out S3TC now, the Savage4 chip should be out in stores by the time you read this.



JARGONATOR UPDATE

Have you ever read a hardware review and wondered what the hell they were talking about? We do all the time, but that hasn't stopped us from making a few guesses

BUNDLED SOFTWARE ⇢ An assortment of games and applications that you would never ever consider buying yourself unless they came "free" with a piece of hardware that you really do want



ERGONOMIC ⇢ A buzzword that every peripheral maker quotes to make their product sound comfortable even if it actually feels like you're playing with an ancient Chinese torture device

FORCED FEEDBACK ⇢ The awkward response given to hardware manufacturers who demand to know why your magazine has just compared their "innovative, revolutionary new peripheral" to a steaming pile of hyena feces



HAT ⇢ The multi-directional switch on the top of a flightstick that is often programmed to change viewpoints on the fly. Also, something that bald men wear to change a hot chick's viewpoint on getting into their fly

OEM ⇢ Acronym for Original Equipment Manufacturer. OEM deals permit one company to sell another company's product as part of their package. Not to be confused with '80s-era synth-rock band OMD

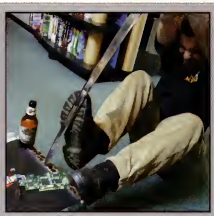


TNA ⇢ Originated in the late '70s by shows like "Charlie's Angels" and "Three's Company," the genre has spread to electronic entertainment in games like *Tomb Raider* and *Sin*. Yes, it means just what you think it does

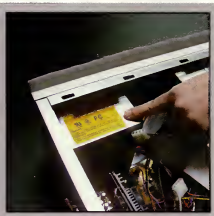
TV OUTPUT ⇢ Allows your maxed-out gaming rig to turn into a $2000 console system by playing games on the low-res family TV



After reading the instructions, Gallant turns his computer off and unplugs it before gingerly removing its cover.



Goofus drinks a six-pack of beer before drunkenly prying the cover off with an old sword. Why, that naughty boy left his computer plugged in!



Gallant makes sure he grounds himself by touching the metal frame of his PC before removing the 3D card from its anti-static bag.

DEMONSTRATION #2:

1. Tear out your old sound card.
2. Smash into pieces.
3. Toss over your shoulder.

The sound those pieces make when they hit the ground all *around* you is the power of A3D from Aureal, the only audio that works the way your ears do.

That's why leading sound card vendors, such as Diamond, TerraTec, Turtle Beach, and Xitel, are using Vortex audio technology from Aureal, the only 3D audio accelerator that supports industry leading A3D positional audio technology.

You can also find A3D positional audio on computer models from the industry's leading PC manufacturers.

Audio based on Aureal technology is awesome. But don't take our word for it. Believe Your Ears. Check out A3D at your local retailer.



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LET THE BATTLE COMMENCE

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls (why are you reading this, it's not for you), welcome to the PC hardware industry's latest main attraction: The second generation 3D graphic accelerator war. It's fair to say that the first war was won at a canter by 3Dfx for their Voodoo and Voodoo 2 chipset. It not only performed fabulously on the games you really care about (*Quake* and *Quake II*) but also hit the market faster than it's nearest rival, the Nvidia TNT.

This time around the lay of the land has changed. First, 3Dfx's decision to merge with STB has limited the number of other companies banging the drum of the Voodoo 3 chipset. Not so for TNT2, as Nvidia's continuing policy to remain a chip manufacturer alone means that heavyweights such as Diamond and Creative are extolling its virtues to all and sundry. We assume 3Dfx believes their work was done with the success of the initial Voodoos, and now it's time to sit back and reap the rewards of a multi-million dollar marketing campaign targeting the mainstream audience, as well as established brand recognition with hardcore gamers.

Other players who barely made an impact in the first round could offer sterner competition now. S3 is coming back from the dirge of the Virge with the S4 (or more importantly, the S3TC function that's going to help all those textures in the newest games). PowerVR has disappeared from the radar, but Matrox is continuing to make inroads (its G200 made up slightly for the disgrace that was the Mystique), while the G400 Max is sporting some impressive features.

But, while the players in this battle may have changed ever so slightly in recent months, the playing field remains the same — littered with early releases, driver malfunctions, marketing schpeel, delayed releases, further driver malfunctions, and an overall sense of apprehension. In this first, tentative, but comprehensive, head-to-head look at the second generation 3D card battlefield, the most striking issue in this race is that of compatibility and drivers.

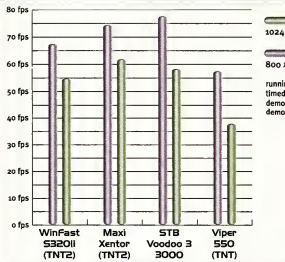
The race to get out first isn't necessarily the one to win — the race to win is in scoring universal acclaim as the next card of choice. And the jury is still out ...

BENCHMARKS

Our testing was limited to some of the applications that we could reliably get to work with all the cards — that was the crux of the issue — since we experienced many problems with the *Expendable* demo, for example. The main issue with compatibility is with the drivers of the two TNT2 boards we received. They are shipping versions, but were a bit buggy and didn't deliver the promised numbers.

TEST MACHINE --> We tried our four options on a PII 400 (Celeron), 128MB RAM, 100MHz 440BX motherboard, running Win98 and Direct X6.

THE QUAKE II SCORES



THE RESULTS

The Voodoo 3 outscored the TNT in Quake II, which is not much of a surprise given the OpenGL performance of the 3DFX minidriver. What is surprising, and evidence of the shakiness of the early TNT2 driver releases, was Leadtek's WinFast TNT2. It came in last, and that was after using glsetup.exe to get a driver (version 0122) that would actually run OpenGL since the one shipping in the boxed CD failed to run any OpenGL application. This particular board boasts many features, and is newly targeted at the gaming market, but the shaky driver support is a real hamstring to what should be a speedy card.



Goofus slices open his bag with a rusty razorblade and rubs the 3D card on a shag carpet. That could be dangerous!



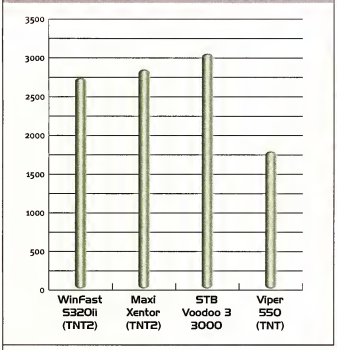
Gallant finds an opening and firmly presses his 3D card into the slot, using a Phillips screwdriver to tighten the screws.

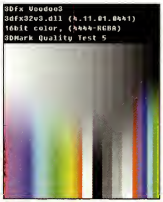


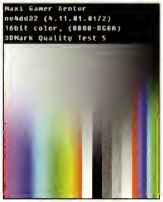
Goofus pounds his card into the PC with a baseball bat before vomiting 72 ounces of Shlitz onto the motherboard.

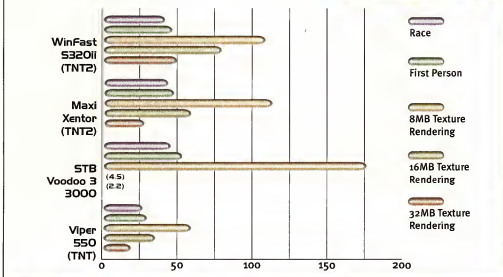
THE 3D MARKS™

We ran the four cards under the default settings of Futuremark's Gamer's Benchmarking utility, 3D Mark (www.3Dmark.com). Here are the results:







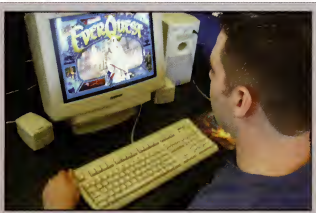


THE RESULTS

In the game tests (both racing and first-person) the Voodoo 3 shone through. Of course, when the going got heavy in the texture rendering, the Voodoo 3's inability to deal with 32-bit textures gave the TNT2 some breathing space. Again, it's important to note that the drivers used for each of these cards were the shipping versions, and driver updates for each has already seen improved performance across the board.

And that really is the issue; Diamond has yet to get its feet wet in the TNT2 market, likely aiming to ensure its market position for trustworthy driver support, and therefore not shipping a card until the software is there to match. For 3Dfx/STB, they have another head start, with impressive scores posted. But the really high-end texture limitations mean that the TNT2's potential is far from being realized by the early, and perhaps quite rushed release of the Guillemot Maxi Xentor drivers (something that's certainly the case with Leadtek's high-end positioned WinFast, too).

Right now our recommendation has to be the Voodoo 3 if you just have to get that next generation accelerator. Just remember for games like *Quake III: Arena* all the frame rates are nice, but it's the TNT2 people who will be witnessing it in full 32-bit color and with excellent image clarity. The fact remains that both the Voodoo 3 and TNT2 chipsets harness some impressive power and features that really won't do you wrong, no matter which way you choose. The facts, as much as we have right now anyway, are here for you to make the decision.



After replacing the cover and plugging in his PC, Gallant reboots and installs the drivers off the bundled CD. Gallant's PC works perfectly!



Goofus hits him over the head with his baseball bat and steals Gallant's computer. Way to go, Goofus!

The world will end in a firestorm of destruction.

Have fun.



WORMS ARMAGEDDON



Exploding sheep, mad cows falling from the sky, mole bombs, detonating old ladies – this can only mean one thing. **Worms Armageddon!** In the latest chapter of the Worms series, following Worms II, PC Gamer's 1998 Turn-Based Strategy Game of the Year, you'll get more features and more weapons for more strategy. It's never the same thing twice, and now you can do battle with up to six teams on one machine, or on-line. But there's still only one way to win. Destroy all your enemies!

worms.team17.com

CD-ROM

July '99

MICROPROSE www.microprose.com

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Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 50

DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD

SHINY | AVG. SCORE | -

PAST SCORES: 10, 8, 6, 4, 2

PREVIOUSLY ON MESSIAH

The last time we looked at *Messiah*, in our preview issue, we were excited by the new graphics technology. The folio filler, "Charles Manson's mother traded him for a pitcher of beer — she got the better end of the deal," set a precedent for all those that would follow. Since then, nothing has really happened with *Messiah*, until now.

Messiah

A religious-free strapline for *Messiah*

After all this time it's really a bit tough to get excited about *Messiah*. We've heard plenty about new graphic technology and four billion polys per character and whatnot, but that was all last year's news. Yup. We're past that. So Shiny, where's the damn game already? C'mon, you've given us a technology taster, now show us that it's fun.



Let's go over the basics again for those new to this. You're this cherubic angel named Bob roaming the world in a third-person perspective situation, who can possess the body of any character in the game, primarily to do dirty work like killing enemies (since an angel can't do much more than flap around). Need to kill lots of bad guys? Possess the body of the biggest, meanest character standing around, then take out his former buddies. A somewhat interesting idea, or at least it sounds that way when it's being explained to you.

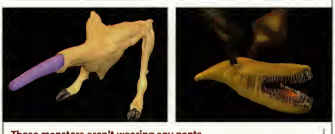
Hmm ... so, Shiny, why should **PCXL** readers still be excited about this game? You've got a complex concept, a year-old engine, and it's been a disconcertingly long time without any new information.

Shiny rep Scott Herrington seems completely unruffled by these accusations. "The technology is cool, the characters are bad-ass, the weapons rock, the game runs great on just about any system, its got some of the most ambitious AI that's ever been put in a game, and the list goes on and on," he enthused. It's good to know that they haven't lost their propensity to talk big over there. Now let's take a look at the headline elements in the order Shiny mentions them.

The technology: There's something called the RT-DAT (Real Time Deformation and Tesselation) engine, which can deal out most, if not all, of the big buzzwords like specular lighting, portals, streaming video, etc. But its main claim to fame is its super- ▶ p. 52



The models in these shots are about 80, 000 polys each.



These monsters aren't wearing any pants.

INFO BOX

DEVELOPER —› Shiny
PUBLISHER —› Interplay
RELEASE DATE —› Q4 '99
3D SUPPORT —› Direct3D, Glide

INTEREST GAUGE

INTERESTED | EXCITED | AROUSED

THE HYPE

A plethora of early hype has since died down. But, the game is "supposed" to have those great graphics.

THE HURDLE

Among the many — living up to the interest generated by the technology.

THE HIT

Though we're still doubtful, you never know what this game might play like.

FIVE QUESTIONS

WE SAT DOWN WITH SHINY'S SCOTT HERRINGTON TO DISCUSS THE LITTLE THINGS THAT MAKE LIFE WORTH LIVING, AND WE WERE HAPPY TO FIND THAT OTHER PEOPLE ENJOY USING THE WORD "PANTS" AS MUCH AS US.

Q: So do you think the real Messiah will return to Earth before your *Messiah* ships?
A: We'll win by a few years, actually. We've already secured an exclusive endorsement agreement for *Messiah VIII* in 2012 though.

Q: Does anyone on the development team look like Jesus?
A: No, but one of the guys looks a lot like Willem Dafoe, does that count?

Q: Which "Simpsons" character do you identify with most?
A: Maggie. Quiet, clueless, carefree, and pants-less.

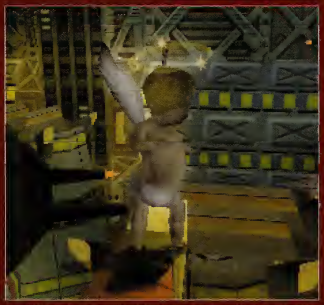
Q: *VR Baseball 2000* was supposedly using the *Messiah* engine, what did you think about how this game turned out?
A: Actually, *VR Baseball 2000* was a secret level in *Messiah* that we turned into a full game. Play as the Anaheim Angels for a regulation season and win the World Series and you'll see what I mean!

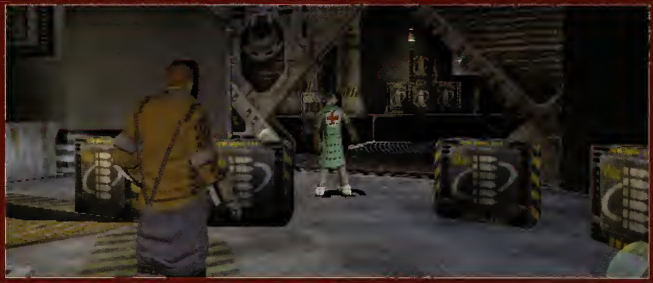
Q: If there's something strange in your neighborhood, who you gonna call?
A: You mean, if I've got ghosts? *Freaky* ghosts? I'd call Stephanie Seymour. Then again, any excuse to call her is okay with me.

Messiah Gallery

Shiny has shown only a half-dozen of the more than 150 locations in the game, so there's really a heck of a lot more to *Messiah* than what's been on display thus far.







The longest name in the Bible is Mahershalahashbaz ("He without pants")

Messiah's most significant change since its last incarnation has been the AI. Without going into too many specifics, Shiny promises that "the AI is one of the coolest 'understated' things that people will groove on in the game." We're not from Missouri, but to that we say, "show me."

At least 5,000 of the 80,000-poly hooker are devoted to "nip."



To a flying baby, the need for pants is negligible. A diaper, however, is a definite plus.



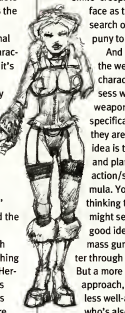
In fact, you might say that this game is really all about the possession and manipulation of pants.

▶ p. 49 scalability, such that it will push as many polys as your CPU can handle, up to a theoretical limit of 80,000 polys per character. Says Herrington, "People think that because we introduced the technology a year ago [in the shoddy *VR Baseball 2000*] that it's "old hat" and that it's no longer something unique. What they've all seemed to have forgotten is that the technology is *scaleable* — so it's gotten even better as the hardware has improved."

The characters: The original target for the number of characters to possess was 30, but it's now pushing a total of 50, allowing for plenty of variety in abilities, weapon skills, and numerous gameplay styles.

The characters range from the previously revealed hookers, pimps, and street dwellers, to the more law 'n' order cops, technicians, and the inevitable medics.

And back to that big tough bad guy, well there's something called the Behemoth. Says Herrington, "While most players will be thinking, 'This thing's gonna kick my ass,' there are those [**PCXL** readers, natch] who will think 'I wonder how I can possess and control *that*?' The first time somebody succeeds, you can just see their eyes light up, and that 'Alec-from-*Clockwork Orange*-smile' creeps across their face as they go in search of somebody puny to pummel."



And finally, there's the weapons: The characters you possess will be your weapons, and more specifically, the guns they are holding. The idea is to add strategy and planning to the action/shoot-em up formula. You'll have a bit of thinking to do. At first, it might seem to be a good idea to send the mass gun-toting character through a slaughterfest. But a more subtle approach, possessing a less well-armed character who's also less offensive to the enemies, would definitely be the better tack to take.

That said, Shiny has promised that their flexible engine will be utilized with some original weapon displays. "Have you ever thought about using a rocket propelled harpoon gun to pin enemies to the walls?" Herrington questions. "We have."

We here at **PCXL** see this game going in one of two directions: Best case — the fast-paced, slick, stylish gameplay that Shiny nailed on the head with *MDK*. Worst case — a confusing mess of a game where you're basically discovering new and interesting ways to off your current possessed character of choice. If we were less jaded we might be thinking that Shiny is heading full-on for the first one. But there's a distinct nagging doubt. The proof will be in the execution of the AI — a call we'd need some serious play time to make. We'd be happy to be proven wrong. It's not like it would be the first time.

— ED LEE *believes that being jaded is not a crime*

CATCHPHRASES

Some essential catchphrases you need to become a smug, self-satisfied member of Gen X

"TALK TO THE HAND"
Used to convey insulting disinterest in a smug way. Accompanied by raised hand at level of face of recipient. Sometimes preceded by, "I shun you"

"AT THE END OF THE DAY"
Precedes pointed commentary, and delivered "Sportsnight"-style

"DON'T GO THERE"
Used to convey wry amusement at contextual territory not meant to be explored. Accent first word for emphasis, followed by slight pause

"YOU'VE GOT ISSUES"
Conveys the belief that the recipient should enter therapy for some childhood trauma — in a smug way

"WHAT ARE YOU SMOKING?"
Disbelief brought on by the accusation that the recipient is "on something"

"I DON'T PLAY THAT"
See "Don't go there"

"RAISE THE ROOF"
Accompanies entrance at a social gathering, goes along with hands-to-roof pumping gesture.

"OH MY GOD, THEY KILLED KENNY"
Annoying pop-culture reference

"YOU'RE WORKING MY LAST NERVE"
See "Don't go there"

"ARE YOU ON CRACK?"
See "What are you smoking"

"THERE WAS THE LINE. YOU JUST CROSSED IT"
See "Don't go there." Miming drawing a line with one's foot and then stepping over it is crucial to the successful delivery of this phrase. "There was the line, this is you" is a variation

"HERE'S THE THING"
See "At the end of the day"

For excellent examples of use, watch "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" or "Friends," or read PCXL



Here we have a clear example of an attack based solely on the baby's lack of pants.

In fact, we have been proven wrong over 15,000 times, including here in this very folio filler



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Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 78

DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD

CAVEDOG AVG. SCORE [-]

PAST SCORES 10 8 6 4 2

PREVIOUSLY ON KINGDOMS

Cavedog unveiled *TA: Kingdoms* partly to satiate the demand of RTS gamers crying out for some high fantasy in the wake of the non-appearance of *War-Craft 3*. But it was more than just *TA* with orcs, as the integrated Boneyards matchmaking service and a variety of carefully designed new units were shaping up to offer a whole new game. The *TA* franchise merely gives it a familiar name on retail shelves.

TA: Kingdoms

Something wicked this way comes

Let's cut to the chase and get back up to speed with what *TA: Kingdoms* is all about. It's set amid a high-fantasy, sword-and-sorcery war erupting across the mythical realm of Darien. Not to be outdone by Blizzard's three-way clash of *StarCraft* brood wars, *Kingdoms* features four unique races. Each of the sides align themselves along moral lines of good and evil, in addition to magical lines rooted in the four elements of Earth, Water, Air, and Fire. Air and Fire have always gotten a bad rap, and the cosmology of *Kingdoms* is no different — so let's have a look at the combatants.

THE GOOD

Aramon (Earth): These forces are the closest to what you might call "normal" and "human." Here you'll find your basic knights, footsoldiers and archers, as well as high-tech units like catapults [insert sarcastic beat of silence]. As is only right and good, the land of Aramonis is the easiest on the eyes, full of lush forests, rolling hills, and civilized townships, many of which are now crawling with enemy zombies.

Veruna (Water): The Veruna folk are the seafaring types, and their forces rely on vast fleets — seaborne armadas patrol the waterways, ferry messengers from island to island, and, when necessary, deliver land-based forces to foreign shores in massive amphibious assaults.

THE BAD

Zhon (Air): The landscape of this realm is dense and harsh, with treacherous jungles and intimidating mountainous terrain. Coastlines, like the ragged edges of torn armor, make the Zhon realm a prime candidate for guerilla warfare. If you're low on guerillas, you can just send out your flying fire-breathing dragons to give your attackers pause for thought.

THE UGLY

Taros (Fire): If the Zhon realm is treacherous, then Taros is just downright evil. This is where the living land stops — the plants are long dead, the people are long gone, the mountains are black, and the sky is fouled. Taros is your one-stop shopping mecca for dark magic, undead armies, and that good old-time religion ... the kind that uses pentagrams and demons.









Castles, spells, and dragons — let the "geeking" begin.

INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Cavedog Entertainment
PUBLISHER → GT Interactive
RELEASE DATE → July 1999
API SUPPORT → Direct3D

INTEREST GAUGE

INTERESTED EXCITED AROUSED

THE HYPE

TA-style realtime strategy in a high-fantasy setting for vast, Tolkien-esque battles of men, mechanisms, monsters, and magic.

THE HURDLE

The top-down RTS is fast approaching the "Done To Death" threshold. What undiscovered country remains to be seen?

THE HIT

Engrossing environments and a *Myth*-ic richness added to solid RTS. Cavedog has learned from OUR mistakes.

FIVE QUESTIONS

LEAD DESIGNER CLAYTON KAUZLARIC ONCE MORE FACES THE ORDEAL OF THE FIVE QUESTIONS.

Q. What's the worst experience you've ever had while playing a computer game?

A. Either the third or fourth time I failed to defeat the final boss in *FFVII* ... I can't choose which.

Q. *Kingdoms* touts fortifications designed to foil early game rushes — tell us a little about these.

A. Tout? As in "to tout?" Who's touting? Show me these touters of whom you speak ... Oh, that was probably me. Well, fortifications are pretty basic. If you're the introverted type you can build walls, gates, and defensive towers intended as one way to counter a rush, especially early in the game. I don't use them much. There is far less rushing threat in *Kingdoms* than we had in the first *TA*. Most units travel on foot so by the time they cross the map there's usually something ready to confront them. Walls can also be handy for funneling units into a kill zone.

Q. Of all the people on the design team, tell us who's the dirtiest fighter when it comes to computer combat, and what he/she does. How about in real combat?

A. I'm guessing Joe Mullenix, one of our unit scripters. He likes to capture enemy builders with Harpies and access their entire build hierarchy.

Q. The *Kingdoms* design team: "The Simpsons," "King of the Hill," "Futurama," or "The Family Guy"?

It's a tie between "Futurama" and "The Simpsons." I think Barney and Bender should get together some time.

Q. Quick: You've got 50 words to sum up your feelings about violence in computer games. Go.

A. Comic books, movies, rock n' roll ... even radio have all had their turn as pop culture villains. It's easier to blame entertainment than be responsible parents and citizens. To sum up, computer games are the new kid on the block, so I guess it's our turn to be a scapegoat for society's ills.



Most of the time, captions are meant to entertain and draw the reader into the story ... most of the time.

In a game cosmology so thick with mystical elements, the resource-gathering aspect of *Kingdoms* revolves around Mana sites scattered hither and yon, surrounded by great standing rocks like so many Stonehenges. These sites are where your Monarchs (leader units, aka Commanders) can create Lodestones in order to accumulate Mana points for the creation of combat units and structures, as well as for the casting of spells in combat.

One of the most intriguing mystical aspects of *Kingdoms* is that the moral lines and goals actually come to something. When certain gameplay conditions are met (these can range from accumulation of Mana to the securing of battlefield objectives), each "side" or elemental force in the game may have its patron deity arrive to assist — in effect, "divine intervention." But should one deity intervene, it may alert the attention of another, and your powerful forces become the pawn in some apocalyptic armageddon that puts *Revelation* to shame.

For established *TA* fans, the main eyebrow-raiser here is less the raw mechanics of the game than the conceptual richness of it. Much of the feel, presentation, and intro-movie setups (some 40-odd single-player adventure missions, or "chapters") smack of the lush, heraldic look that Bungie's *Myth* pulled off so well. The sprawling single-player adventure campaigns are arranged in such a way that you will eventually end up getting a taste of each side's gameplay.

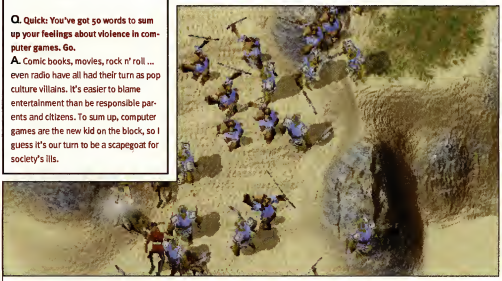
All mystical gimmickery aside, the heart of the game is still the raw unit movement and combat, and *Kingdoms* pumps it up in these areas as well. The veteran-status scheme means that units undergo actual physical changes as they grow in combat experience, and the amount of gold coloring visible on a unit's armor or uniform will reflect that unit's greater skill.

With 3D terrain, holding a hill actually means something, as your lines of sight and fire increase to reflect your elevation. For the control freak, a new radar actually lets you conduct maneuvers across the entire battlefield from a single screen. Here you can't really see specific information on the units, but you can still order them around.

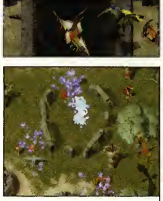
Finally, Cavedog's designers have obviously tired of the predictable strategies that turn RTS games into flailing contests, because *Kingdoms* touts battleground fortifications designed to diminish the effectiveness of the Tank,er, excuse me, the Troll Rush. In addition, the *Kingdoms* order-queueing scheme is just beautiful. To be able to tell a unit to go here, build this, attack this, that and the other, then go over here, repair this, and finally patrol from badda to bing ... well, that's worth a Monarch's ransom.

And let's not forget those ever-downloadable expansion combat units. This early, early preview build of *Kingdoms* already looks and feels like a winner, and the four distinct sides — with way-too-big scuttling beetle-thingies and entire airborne squadrons (or "wings," if you prefer) of fire-breathing dragons — holds the potential for some truly exciting multiplayer games. And that, of course, on Boneyards, will be where *Kingdoms* gets its most intense test.

— CHRIS HUDAK *has many stories about his contributions this issue (Ed. note: And so do we)*







Example: "Hey, this caption is so clever, I better read the whole story!"

DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD

ACCOLADE | AVG. SCORE: | •

PAST SCORES: 10, 8, 6, 4, 2

PREVIOUSLY ON OUTCAST

Our first hands-on peek at *Outcast* came over a year after first witnessing its voxelicious visuals at 1997's European Computer Trade Show. It was getting better. Anti-aliasing on the voxel terrain made a staggering difference, and the high-polygon monsters looked incredible. Without a doubt, the interest Gauge is rising.

Outcast

The word "voxelicious" enters the English language

I've played a lot of games and visited a myriad of places in the process. I've traveled to countless alien planets, witnessed endless versions of post-apocalyptic Manhattan, more motherships than I can count, and I've even found myself on a pixelated digital hunting ground or two. But while many of these places looked good, few really made me feel like I was somewhere I'd never been before. However, with its combination of amazing environments, mind-boggling creatures, and living populous powered by an impressively realistic AI, *Outcast* is one of the rare computer games that can do exactly that.

The unique look of this game is due in large part to its voxel-based graphics (think of voxels as 3D pixels or "Graphical Legos"). Go ahead and admit it: By now, you've probably bought into polytheism (the belief that polygons are God, I think). But please, just for a moment, open your mind and consider that maybe polygons aren't the only way to make a cutting-edge game look good. While the vast majority of new games rely heavily on ever advancing 3D accelerator technology, *Outcast* creates unbelievable worlds (five bizarre locales in all) without the need for a 3D chipset. In fact, this game features more impressive special effects (lens flare, incredible water ripples, and weapon effects, among others) than you see in most accelerated games.

Since the world of *Outcast* is not made up of a collection of flat polygons, the landscape is bumpy, rounded, and completely organic. *Outcast*'s outdoor environments have a distinct other-worldly flavor — sometimes lush, sometimes chilly, occasionally atmospheric (French for "weird") but always an incredible sight to see. The worlds you will find in *Outcast* are unlike











Most of the AI characters in *Outcast* are more intelligent than your average government employee.

INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Appeal
PUBLISHER → Infogrames
RELEASE DATE → Fall '99
API SUPPORT → None

INTEREST GAUGE

UNINTERESTED — EXCITED — AROUSED

THE HYPE

Who needs 3D accelerators? *Outcast* has great graphics and doesn't need a Voodoo 3 to run well. Let's see *Quake III* do that.

THE HURDLE

Gamers want to use their 3D accelerators. Plus the question of Belgium-developed games' art over substance is a concern.

THE HIT

Finally, a game that will take you somewhere you've never been before, and make you want to stay.

OTHER OUTCASTS

From time to time things don't work out in a workplace and people choose to leave. Have you ever wondered what happens to those people? Here's just a sampling



SHANNON DOHERTY
PRE-OUTCAST
JOB→ Lead Actress and Beverly Hills bitch on "Beverly Hills 90210"
POST-OUTCAST
JOB→ Straight-to-video skin flicks and a WB sitcom — pretty much the same thing



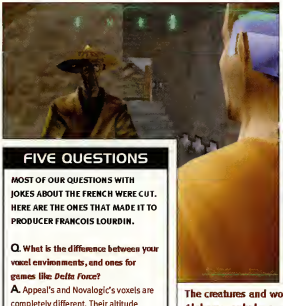
DENNIS RODMAN
PRE-OUTCAST
JOB→ Annoying idiot that played pro basketball
POST-OUTCAST
JOB→ Annoying, unemployed idiot

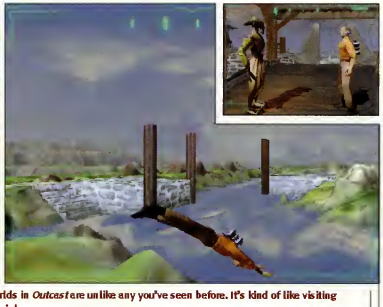


RICHARD NIXON
PRE-OUTCAST
JOB→ The most powerful man in the free world
POST-OUTCAST
JOB→ The most badly-impersonated man in the free world



HECTOR SALAZAR
PRE-OUTCAST
JOB→ Scarecrow, art director, editor for PCXL
POST-OUTCAST
JOB→ Cast rock, crack whore (uhh ... for PCXL)





The creatures and worlds in *Outcast* are unlike any you've seen before. It's kind of like visiting Alabama, only less weird.

FIVE QUESTIONS

MOST OF OUR QUESTIONS WITH JOKES ABOUT THE FRENCH WERE CUT. HERE ARE THE ONES THAT MADE IT TO PRODUCER FRANCOIS LOURDIN.

Q. What is the difference between your voxel environments, and ones for games like *Delta Force*?

A. Appeal's and Novalogic's voxels are completely different. Their altitude database and ours are not used the same way. Appeal is also using new interpolation techniques to create more vivid and dynamic landscapes.

Q. *Outcast* has a bit of swearing in it. How do you think that will be accepted by mainstream U.S. audiences?

A. There was quite a bit of swearing in popular motion pictures such as *Pulp Fiction*, etc. I think it was accepted by mainstream audiences all over the world. The expressions were used in a specific context rather than gratuitously. That is exactly what we did with *Outcast*.

Q. What particular feature of *Outcast* are you most proud of, and why?

A. People have marveled at the graphic quality of the game — the backgrounds, the water engine, the wild life. Others are more interested in the AI technology, which we believe surpasses everything delivered so far. The soundtrack has gotten a lot of attention, too. *Outcast* is probably the same step ahead in history as *Alone in the Dark* in its time.

Q. Are U.S. audiences ready for story-focused games, or are they in the shoot first/ask questions later mind set?

A. U.S. audiences have appreciated story-focused games since 1984 with *Zork* and the first *Ultima* games. That attraction towards fantasy and imagination has never vanished. For some reason it has just been limited to RPG's and some point-and-click adventure games.

Q. How would you compare *Outcast*'s AI with a game such as *Tomb Raider*?

A. The AI in *Tomb Raider* is very fine for the type of game it is. *Outcast* is more complex and requires more interaction. We've taken our AI and sophisticated it, to go with the compelling and involved storyline and gameplay experience.

any you've seen before. (And don't say "but *Delta Force* uses voxels." The difference between the environments in these two games is the difference between the worlds of *Doom* and *Quake II*.)

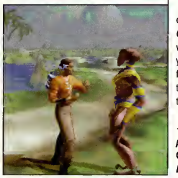
No matter how beautiful it is, a place wouldn't really feel alive if it didn't have living creatures in it, and *Outcast* includes creatures that would feel right at home in the most imaginative fantasy movie. Since the terrain is built with easy-to-process voxels, your CPU power is free to push some serious polygon numbers. For instance, at one point you'll be assaulted by a giant biped monster that will leave you standing slack-jawed and drooling at its graceful movement, smooth structure, and incredible design. It left me absolutely stunned during a look at a beta version, and as I mention before, I play a lot of games. High polygon creatures such as this populate the entire game, making you wonder why so many games focus their processing power on environments that look like paintings, and leave characters and creatures looking like crayon drawings.

Even though the characters look astonishing, they wouldn't feel real unless they acted real. While *Outcast*'s graphics will get a lion's share of the attention, equally impressive is the AI. Each creature will react to what's going on in a way rarely seen before. If you're nice to them they'll warn you of trouble; if you're cruel, they'll hold grudges; and if you harm innocents, they'll steer clear of you. Even the animals have detailed AI. You can ditch a carnivore by running to an unknowing herbivore, making it the meat eater's lunch.

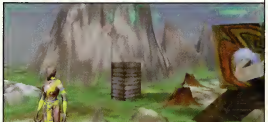
When you put the graphics, the characters, and the AI together, *Outcast* is creating a believable world that will make you feel like you're actually visiting someplace fantastic and new, which is something that just doesn't happen all that often in computer games.

— DAN EGGER *almost peed his pants when he saw a monster in* Outcast. *Luckily he wears Depends (Dan, nat the monster)*



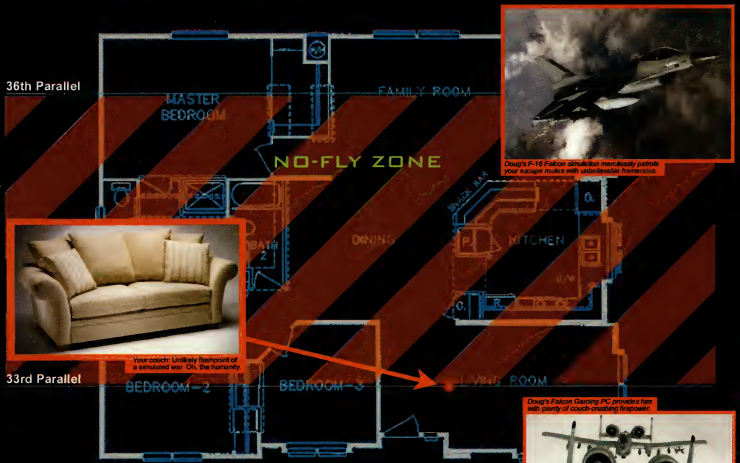






Even though *Outcast* is not 3D accelerated, it has some impressive special effects.

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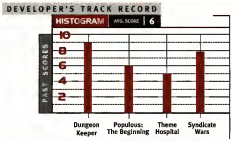


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Dungeon Keeper 2

My world — welcome to it

Purchase, play, or be seen in remote proximity to a copy of *Dungeon Keeper 2* and there's no way off the shame train. If its approach to realtime gaming appeals to you, you're a geek and that's all there is to it. You might as well 'fess up to the hours you spent (or secretly wished you'd spent) moving high-fantasy metal figurines and rolling colorful polyhedral dice that look like the newest confectionery off the Willy Wonka production line.

In this sequel, it's another prosperous land of happy-go-luckiness that you, as underground ruler of all you excavate and survey, wish to destroy. The overall purpose is to retrieve 25 portal gems, one each from the various Lords of the Land in the kingdom of Harmonia. Put them together and thus open the doorway to the green and pleasant land above — then turn it dark and nasty. And remember ole Horny from the first game? The big, bad-ass grim reaper, with an attitude amazingly worse than many heroes of the NBA, plays a prominent role. Only he is strong enough to handle the gems you seek, so much of your time will now be devoted to careful PR management of the temperamental little bastard.

Simply put, *Dungeon Keeper 2* is a realtime strategy/management game in which you excavate, design, and maintain nearly every aspect of a Dank, Dark Dungeon™ in the vein of a Dungeons & Dragons scenario (and is also the sequel to Peter Molyneux's Bullfrog swan song). Starting from the "Heart" of the dungeon — what *C&C* or *StarCraft* vets would call the command center — it's your job to send forth imps to dig out rooms designated by you in much the same way that plots of land are zoned for residential or commercial construction. Each area is then marked for the kind of function you need, be it training room, hatchery (all monsters eat cute, fluffy chickens), torture chamber, and the all-new casino (even dark angels and black knights need a little R&R).

Dig out rich veins of gold to stack the glittering treasure rooms and pay for the services of the vile creatures now attracted to your underground domicile. It all needs protecting against other dungeon keepers vying for evil residents and the more ghastly interference of "heroes," now including the King of the Realm as an even tougher encounter than the Lord of the Land.

Importantly, Bullfrog's beautiful new colorful game engine not only looks better from the famil-





"You spin me right round baby, right round, like a record baby, right round, round, round ..."

INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Bullfrog
PUBLISHER → Electronic Arts
RELEASE DATE → December '99
API SUPPORT → Direct3D

INTEREST GAUGE

INTERESTED | EXCITED | ANJOLIED

THE HYPE

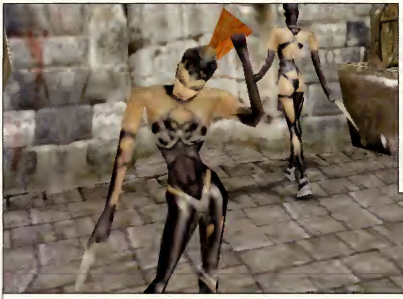
General evil, basic callousness, and very specific greed are heartily rewarded in this realtime management game.

THE HURDLE

You have to oversee every single aspect of dungeon management. Hey, it was this or *P.E. Teacher 2*.

THE HIT

There is nothing quite so cool as watching your enemies blunder into a vicious, dirty-minded dungeon trap.





Marv Albert and friend share a touching moment.

iar isometric perspective, but the improvements are making the underused first-person perspective of the first game much more appealing. The "heroes versus dungeon denizens" battle is going to occur more in first-person, making you get down and dirty in this evil underground. Creatures also have new special abilities when you take control. The new dark elf has a sniper mode in first-person, for example. The switching of emphasis on perspective also drags the potential threat of traps more dangerously into the equation.

The lackluster, even worthless traps of the first game have been significantly enhanced. Whatever anyone else tells you, the traps are the malformed, blackened, crusty Grinchian heart of *Dungeon Keeper 2*. They're where your worst instincts surface and shine. Aside from dropping spiders, bile demons, trolls, and other sundry good-guy fodder in the heroes' rose-petal strewn way, you can stick a new sentry cannon at the end of long corridor and watch the little do-gooders cavort in pain as they try to make their way to safety. Throw in torture devices, the Indiana Jones-esque rolling balls, and a few of the other ten options, and heroes are going to be watching their step. A trigger trap could be a great multiplayer device — set up a string of spikes, noxious gas traps, cannons, and others, let the heroes into the middle, then pull the lever and watch the destructive show.

That first-person mode had such a rich vein of gameplay that it was a shame it wasn't explored further in *DK*. In *DK2*, the original viewing perspectives (flies have a multifaceted view, etc.) return and will be put to better effect.

Other gameplay mechanics are getting a serious overhaul, learning from some of those chronically confusing parts of the last game. For starters, each creature now occupies its own space, meaning that you can't drop ten dragons on one tile. This affects not only the strategy of more carefully judging your room dimensions and character selection for a particular battle but also makes combat a whole lot clearer — a definite boon from the chaotic scene of spells, weapons, and billious secretions from other characters when jumping in to first-person melees.

The stylized, oh-so-nauseatingly nice voiceover of the first game will form the basis of the 25 missions that comprise the main





"You minions of Hell seen a tall skinny chick in spandex come this way?"

FIVE QUESTIONS

FOR CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND OUR CONTROL, THE PCXL STAFF WAS FORCED TO FILL IN AS *DK2* DEVELOPMENT TEAM MEMBERS TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS. THIS IS WHAT WE THINK THEY'D SAY ...

Q. The "evil" in *DK* and *DK2* is obviously presented in a tongue-in-cheek manner ... but what's the closest thing to serious, real, disturbing evil you've ever seen in a computer game?
A. The *Barbie Fashion Designer* fashion show. The purest evil in the known universe, except for Kathy Lee Gifford.

Q. A design-team-defining classic question: "The Simpsons," "Futurama," "King of the Hill or "Family Guy"? Gimme some serious insight here, ok?
A. "The Simpsons" is the original, the master, and hands down the best show on TV. The others are merely trying to imitate the master. Much like everyone in the games industry trying to match Carmack's programming excellence. Ain't gonna happen.

Q. What were the five most influential, uh, influences (movies, books, psychoactives, food poisonings, etc.) for the original *Dungeon Keeper*?
A. Peter Molyneux's mind and body is influenced by all those things in one organic lump. To go into any further detail could lead to my sudden demise — something I like to avoid at all costs.

Q. What the heli do you guys have against chickens, anyway?
A. Ah, I took you for one of those chicken-lovers. Besides, chickens are vile little creatures that are only good on sourdough bread with cheese and just the right amount of mayo.

Q. If you could put any one person, company trend, or aspect of this industry into your personal dungeon of pain, what/who would it be, and what would be their fate?
A. Chris Hudak. He'd be forced to hit 50 deadlines a day, complete with all the screenshots, questions, and information that the piece requires. Failure to do so and he's forced to dress in Ralph Lauren polo shirts, Dockers Khakis and chaps (and no pool playing for a year).



Take a wife in *DK* and she'll probably get half this gold.

game campaign. Fortunately, Bullfrog hasn't stopped there. Twenty skirmish maps will let you try out a variety of tactics against other keepers in addition to the new "My Pet Dungeon" maps. This new setup is for the dungeon architects out there — time and resource limits are nixed in favor of letting you create any damn setup that flits from your crazed mind. Of course, you can still discover how your evil plans work by dropping some heroes in and watching the carnage (or their embarrassing maneuvers, with heroes now backed by higher quality AI whereby they will run if injured, rather than fight to the bitter end).

The true promise of *DK2* lies in its invigorating multiplayer game, set to include some of the options that were promised for the years that *DK1* was hyped, and then completely failed to materialize. For starters Bullfrog is supporting its own battle server for matchmaking multiplayer games.

On top of the campaign, skirmish, and "My Pet Dungeon" maps there will be 20 additional maps created specifically for multiplayer. Again, however, some of the multiplayer elements are still undecided. One concept (one person playing as keeper, building and refitting the dungeon, while other player-controlled heroes try to destroy the Heart) is a fantastic premise that's already been promised once, and I'm sufficiently cynical to not get too enthusiastic this time around.

Still, whatever *DK*'s limitations (incredibly fun for a while, excruciatingly painful towards the end), it was a fantastic basis that the current incumbent Bullfrog designers are evidently well qualified to enhance. Cool ideas such as having the game engine recognize incoming e-mail and sending you a message are more great Molyneux-suggested concepts that didn't ever see the light of day in *DK1*.

Here's hoping that not only are the enhanced graphical changes given preminence in the remaining few months of development, but also those sparks of satire, that black humor, and the whole feel that seems to be typically, er, British come through. Then, without a doubt, *DK2* is set for even bigger and better things.

It's tenacious work, it's rewarding, it's funny, it's ... well, it's evil. And evil is good.

— **CHRIS HUDAK** *submitted this preview under circumstances that only* **PCXL** *would print*

CONTROL FREAKS

Just for total God-like control of an imaginary realm doesn't just brand you a geek, but a control freak, too. Here are a few examples of controlled fantasy outlets, and what happens to those who participate

THE DUNGEONS & DRAGONS PLAYER

FAVORITE AUTHOR → J.R.R. Tolkien
DIAGNOSIS → Stable. He's a weirdo, but he probably stays out of trouble with the law, and is unlikely to get his sister pregnant.
SADNESS RATING → 3 (is being most alarming)

THE CALL OF CTHULHU PLAYER

FAVORITE AUTHOR → H.P. Lovecraft
DIAGNOSIS → Critical. This is a game-master type with a dark, tainted edge, who probably practices questionable stuff in a hidden basement shrine. H. mutters to himself in monosyllabics
SADNESS RATING → 4

THE FANTASY FOOTBALL PLAYER

FAVORITE AUTHOR → Danny Sheridan
DIAGNOSIS → Terminal. Here's a guy closest to the likelihood of actual physical exercise, and he still does the fake-reality thing, and takes it really seriously. This guy will try to hit you if you diss his fantasy team and/or he's had enough cheap beer
SADNESS RATING → 5









The new graphics engine is quite versatile.



It's like Caesar's Palace without the hookers.

YOU'RE GONNA

FEATURING THE MUSIC OF
Cypress Hill
FROM THE RELEASE

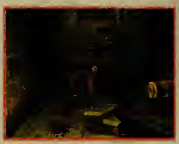


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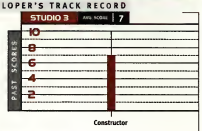
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Go to **http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411**: Product Number 60

DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD



Street Wars

Might be better titled, "Sin City"

For those of you who aren't familiar with *Constructor*, I'll clue you in. Just over a year ago these Brits at veteran developer Studio 3 released a sim/strategy game that combined a balanced sim (like *Sim City*) engine with unique characters and some hysterical moments. In the UK the game sold like mad, but in the U.S., publishers Acclaim barely bothered to mention its release and no one heard of the damn thing. The basic premise was to build up your city and population, while sending nuisances (in the form of vagrants, party animals, Mafioso's, and thugs) to neighboring cities — kind of a multiplayer *Sim City* with a bit of Monty Python-esque humor. Overall, it was a fun little game.

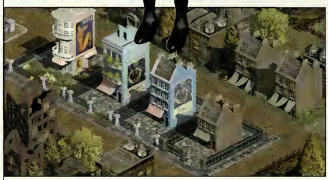


Essentially, *Street Wars* takes a small portion of *Constructor*, and brings it into its own gaming universe based on the same engine. No more pansy-ass citizens to worry about, now it's all about the mob (which was the best part of *Constructor* anyway). In *Street Wars* you play the mob boss, the Don Corleone, the head of the family. It's your responsibility to create, expand, and defend your family's turf — at all cost. Like any self-respecting mob boss, you start at the bottom with a single building, which you must turn into an empire built on those American cornerstones of success — corruption and greed. There are 48 building types to construct, and dozens of pre-built ones that you can take over, in your quest to be king of the underworld, ranging from breweries to brothels to Casinos, and every other typically mob-related illegal operation imaginable. As "the boss," you raise prices on hookers, pay off coppers, and generally perform outside the law trying to make money, corrupt people, destroy enemies, and become the Bill Gates of organized crime.

The buildings and businesses are a big part of *Street Wars*' appeal, but the characters in the game are easily the most intriguing aspect. Every character comes with its own humorous, stylized cartoon/animated video sequence, and judging from our early look at the game, they're actually funny. The usual mob-type characters make up a good portion of your army, but the most desirable characters are the







Ho's, mobsters, strip joints — ahh, life in the big city.

INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Studio 3
PUBLISHER → Studio 3
RELEASE DATE → September '99
API SUPPORT → OpenGL

INTEREST GAUGE

UNINTERESTED | EXCITED | AROUSED

THE HYPE

Built on the success of *Constructor*, which combined balanced gameplay with some genuinely funny moments.

THE HURDLE

Mob-based themes and *Sim City*-type games are hot, but the game is unlikely to get much press or attention in the U.S.

THE HIT

Constructor was big in the UK, but a big nothing in the U.S. A new distribution deal is desperately needed.





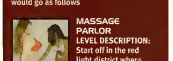


STREET WHORES

Running the mob isn't all spaghetti and guns. You have to manage a business as well.



With world management sims beginning to explore many new genres, we've come up with the next logical step: *Street Whores 2000*. This five-world game would go as follows



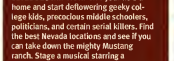
MASSAGE PARLOR
LEVEL DESCRIPTION: Start off in the red light district where you breed and sell off your daughters to horny husbands. Beware of police busts, ambitious daughters, and deranged psychopaths

STREET PIMP
LEVEL DESCRIPTION: After mastering the fine art of running a massage parlor, don a knock-off Armani suit, and move on to being a street pimp. Get your bitches hooked on crack, and make 'em sell their bodies for you. The pimp-slap is your only weapon against unproductive ho's



ESCORT SERVICE
LEVEL DESCRIPTION: Take your ho's uptown and sell them off for "erotic massages" to visiting businessmen. Clever names, bribing cab drivers, and high-quality ho's are your only hope to survive

MADAME OF A BROTHEL
LEVEL DESCRIPTION: Give your ho's a home and start deflowering geeky college kids, precocious middle schoolers, politicians, and certain serial killers. Find the best Nevada locations and see if you can take down the mighty Mustang ranch. Stage a musical starring a washed-up country singer with large breasts and Loni Anderson's scorned ex



HEIDI FLEISS
LEVEL DESCRIPTION: Finally you are the ultimate pimp and you get to serve kinky celebs like Hugh Grant, Charlie Sheen, James Cann, and Michael Douglas. Keep clear of the cops and prepare for the final deathmatch with the moral majority

"undesirables." These irritating criminals can be sent to rival gangs and neighboring cities to annoy and destroy. The San Quentin Ghost will haunt properties and clear out tenants, while Bruto the Nutter (similar to Leatherface) will maraud building sites, preventing any building from being fully constructed.





Commanded from a detailed, button-packed interface, hoodlums, hookers, and hitmen also perform dastardly acts of sex and violence, which will distract the enemy from their job at hand.

The location-centric control system (fancy name for "easy-to-use," unlike *Constructor*), crazy characters, and original approach make *Street Wars* a game I'm genuinely excited about playing.

The lone concern is that the humor, while good, is likely to get really old, really fast, and I'm not sure if what will remain in the game is as deep or addictive as a *Sim City 3000*.

— MIKE SALMON *is the official Mafia game expert at* **PCXL**. *Let's just say he's "connected"*





(Upper right) Crap! Yes, that insect really is riding on a big ol' steaming piece of the stuff.

FIVE QUESTIONS

STUDIO 3's SENIOR "CONSIGLIERE" AND OCCASIONAL JOKER, TIM BEST, WAS GIVEN THE UNENVIABLE TASK OF TRYING TO BE FUNNY AFTER A REALLY HARD DAY AT WORK. *TRYING*.

Q: Given the average mobster's limited dialog, what kinds of language should we expect? PG? R? NC-17?

A: Depends on the player's vocabulary and their ability to understand what we're saying. The inspiration for the dialogue has its roots in Monty Python — quite dark, a little anarchic and, wherever possible, totally politically incorrect (bit like being a spin-doctor for Clinton). Let's put it this way, it has a lot less bleeps than a daytime edition of the "Jerry Springer Show" (though that isn't difficult as he has more bleeps than a Road Runner cartoon). Other strong dialogue influences we have are the way our wives and girlfriends speak to us after a late-night *Quake* session, the "Black Adder" series, and God's own comedian Alf Garnett (known as Archie Bunker over there I believe).

Q: What is the best part of *Street Wars*? You know, the defining moment?

A: There's that real special one when the gold disk master has been sent to the duplicators and you're already so drunk that you can't walk. Then there's the first call from someone who's bought the game and they're ringing to tell you they think it's really cool (that's probably the best of all). And let's not forget the moment you get the first royalty check, that's quite a "defining moment" as well.

Q: What do you think of another game with the same engine called *Street Whores*? Ya know, where you're a pimp.

A: Damn. How did you know what the original name of *Street Wars* was? Well the cat's out the bag now.

Q: Speaking of street whores, I noticed the inclusion of hookers. Was there "special" research done on this topic?

A: What else are E3, Comdex, and the Game Developer's Conference for? You didn't think our industry goes there to work did you? Naw, no one believes that, surely.

Q: Why *Street Wars*? Isn't it just like *Sim City*?

A: Yeah, It's just the same. Same psychopathic killers, same hookers, same corrupt police force, same "when does this bloody game end" feeling. I suppose to someone with the same genetic background as Homer Simpson it might seem the same. *[Doh! – Ed]*



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REVIEWS

Summer Lovin'

There are certain undeniable truths in life: Death, taxes, and beer. We live by these truths. They are the rules which make our existence unsafe and sane. Summer has its own criteria which make it a different time of year. Summer means vacation, fun in the sun, bikini-clad women, big action movies, and no new games to speak of. (Well, you could speak of them, but it would likely include some conjugation of the word "ass.") This year that is all changing. *MechWarrior 3* and *Aliens versus Predator* are two of the best games — no matter what time of the year they are released. You can find out the dirty details on these two hot games, and every other game under the sun, in the most honest reviews in the industry, right here in PCXL.



AvP: Good enough to scare the living shit out of you?

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN

Flawless, perfect, better than that sex dream with Kirstie Alley and Nell Carter, and a lot less flabby	10
A true classic. An excellent game that is well worth the money	9
A great game, but may feature a few minor flaws that are easily overlooked	8
A good, solid game that lacks the inspiration or vision of a truly great game	7
A game that rises above the average (barely) due to a hook in style or gameplay	6
The definition of mediocrity, this game doesn't commit any major crime other than being ordinary	5
A game that doesn't exactly suck, but probably won't hold your interest for long	4
OK, maybe there's an element of redeeming value in this game, but it still sucks	3
Very little of interest, this game is deeply flawed and should be avoided	2
Extreme Bullrider, Extreme Paintbrawl, Extreme Tennis — extreme amounts of ass	1

KILLER GAME

Any game that receives a 9 or 10 from our rigorous scoring system warrants this nifty logo. If you see the PC ACCELERATOR Killer Game stamp, you know it's a game worth buying. Only the true classics deserve this elite status, so don't expect to see this symbol often.



SUICIDE

If we're going to create a stamp for the truly great, then it's only fair to label the unforgivable shit as well. It takes an abominable score of 1 or 2 to qualify for the noose around the neck. Heed our warning: Stay away from these games at all costs.



HALL OF "SASS"

These are the games that make our hobby (uh, job— muhahaha) worthwhile. There are few games that will ever reach the now coveted Hall Of Sass, those that do make it are the best of the breast — uhh, we mean "best."

HALF-LIFE
Publisher—> Sierra
Developer—> Valve
Rating—> 11
How good is it? The best game in the history of games (except "spin the bottle" — now *that* was a game)

QUAKE II
Publisher—> Activision
Developer—> Id
Rating—> 10
How good is it? The best multiplayer game in the history of games (except "spin the bottle," of course)

C&C: RED ALERT
Publisher—> Westwood Studios
Developer—> Westwood Studios
Rating—> 9
How good is it? Three years later and we think it's still better than any other RTS (except *StarCraft*)

STARCRAFT
Publisher—> Blizzard
Developer—> Blizzard
Rating—> 10
How good is it? Took RTS games to a new, exciting level and is still one of the most played games in the office

HALL OF ASS

Some games are so bad that they deserve to be kicked repeatedly until the developer/publishers learn their lesson. Without games of this extreme nature, we wouldn't realize how good the good games are. Thanks — now quit it already.

SIERRA SPORTS PRO FOOTBALL
Publisher—> Sierra
Developer—> Sierra Sports
Rating—> 1
How bad is it? We rate our games on a scale of 1 to 10, it got a zero. Do the math

EXTREME BULLRIDER
Publisher—> Head Games (Activion, we know who you are and you should be ashamed of yourselves)
Developer—> Radish Works
Rating—> 1
How bad is it? "A collection of 1's and 0's equaling poo," said poo expert Dan Egger

REDNECK DEER HUNTIN'
Publisher—> Interplay
Developer—> Xatrix
Rating—> 1
How bad is it? Redneck jokes and a really bad hunting game — this game is the Webster's definition of "craptacular"

EXTREME PAINTBRAWL
Publisher—> Head Games (Only *Quake 3* will make up for this travesty)
Developer—> Creative Carnage
Rating—> 0
How bad is it? There is absolutely zero working AI, in a frickin' finished game!

ACCELE-RATED >>

This additional rating provides specific information on how a game performs on a variety of competing 3D chipsets. We test games on up to four major 3D cards and report back with the true test for any 3D accelerator: how it affects the game. We base these ratings on graphic enhancements, framerates, and performance to give you a good idea of how a game will perform on your 3D card.

(Note: Performance may vary depending on the card and the setup of your system)



RATINGS >>

Our rating scale is a simple 1 to 10 — no decimal points, no obscure percentages, just a straight score that gets right to the point. Before we score games, they undergo countless hours of testing on different systems, with different 3D cards — our reviewers even play the games under the influence of various narcotics. In the end we stamp a single score on the game, which is essentially a numeric value of the game's worth. We love games and always try to look on the bright side, but when a pile of steaming crap comes in, we won't hold back and allow our readers to waste their money on said crap. You can count on our reviews for honesty, insight, and maybe even a few laughs.

GRAPHICS

Rendering quality, framerates, and special effects all contribute to an immersive gaming experience.

SOUND

Visceral sound effects and appropriate music can help make a good game great.

DEPTH

How often you find yourself playing a game, and how long, are good indicators of its quality.

DESIGN

The backbone of a game is the overall vision behind it, from characters and weapons to levels and missions.

RATING



killer game!

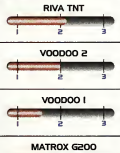
DEVELOPER →	Zipper Interactive
PUBLISHER →	MicroProse
REQUIRED →	P166, 32MB RAM, 200 MB HD Space, 4x CD ROM
IDEAL →	PII 450, 128MB RAM, 400 MB HD space, TNT2 card, Microsoft Sidewinder Joystick

MechWarrior 3

A reminder of why we got into this business

ACCELE-RATED

By now you probably know that I am biased to the TNT over the Voodoo 2. It's a subjective thing, but I appreciate the richer, truer colors and higher contrast rendering of the TNT. So that gives the TNT the edge — that, and it's great looking in 1024x768 mode.



API SUPPORT: Direct3D, Glide

It takes just five minutes to realize *MW3* is pure gold. The first 30 seconds is the pure visceral reaction to the incredibly detailed Mechs themselves — early evidence of a fantastic engine. Then, at about the two-minute mark there's the sense of power and scale as you aim the Mech's four missile packs and six lasers at a building and squeeze the trigger. By the time you hit the four-hour mark and you're finally starting to get deep into the detailed intricacies of the customization process, you can only shake your head. Three words: "It's farging awesome."

Back in the embryonic stages of this game, having FASA's official *MechWarrior* stamp of approval was considered its big ace in the hole (on top of the huge success of the second game in this franchise). It's great testament to the game design how little all that has to do with making *MW3* great. Even though it is an obsessively detailed world with enough material for hundreds of games, it's not really employed to any great effect here. With this engine and gameplay, the Mechs could be completely original designs, and I wouldn't give a rat's ass about the license. Hell, make 'em look like giant Teletubbies — just so long as I can load 'em up with dual PPC's and jump jets.

Anyone who played *MW2* or its follow-up, *MW2: Mercs*, is gonna be instantly at home here. You're in the old "you're the only combat unit that made it to the planet alive, now you have to shoot your way out" scenario, which is a predictable concession to the linear progression of these kinds of games. Nothing new here, it's the familiar "destroy and escort" format. Four operations with four to seven missions each are enough to keep you busy for a while, or at least 20 hours.

Once you sit through an incomprehensible briefing delivered by a labored-breathing guy who sounds like he's gonna keel over any second, you then take your Mech, load it out with weapons, armor, and equipment, and blow the hell out of things. ▶ p. 70











Giant robots to the left of me, giant robots to the right of me, no funny captions in sight.

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MechWarrior 3 Gallery



The *Mech3* environment is pretty interactive, as missiles will blow craters into the ground, while a dip in the water will cool down your Mech. And it looks amazing, as you can see.

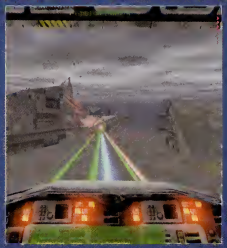


















What does *Mech3* have to do with an ex-Miss America from Louisiana? Turn to page 71 to see

http://www.pcaccelerator.com

p. 68 At the end of each mission you salvage anything you didn't destroy, which will sometimes include actual Mech chassis to replace those you or your lancemates have lost. Battlefield loot is stored in your mobile field bases (MFBs) — three trucks that can repair and reload your Mech as many times as you need during each mission — with the catch being that if you don't have the armor or ammo needed, you're shit outta luck. Guard these suckers at all costs because if you lose one, you lose 1/3 of your entire salvage, and you don't get it back until the start of the next op.

Strapped into your Mech, you are king of the post-apocalyptic battlefield. And although you'll go up against the typical fixed gun emplacements, tanks, helicopters, and humans in battlesuits, most combat will be against other Mechs. This is the heart of the game. Pound your 70 tons of mechanized armor and weapons against their 70 tons, and see who's got better aim, more guts, and who's most prepared. With dozens of armaments from which to choose, you can group weapons of varying types, firing rates, and ranges for maximum effect. Start a fight with twin long range missile salvos, then switch to a PPC or ER Laser immediately. Then time the shot so it hits at the same time the missiles do (hopefully causing a knockdown or overheat), and finally close and switch to grouped short range missiles, grouped pulse lasers, or armor-shredding autocannons. Of course, if they jump jet over your missile salvo, knock you down with a preemptive AC-10 to the head, or if he's got backups coming, you've got to adjust your strategy — and fast.



Jump jets give you much greater mobility, as well as some pretty cool moves to impress family and friends.



Every time I think I can get away from the giant robots, they keep pulling me back in.



We've heard there's a hidden Mech masturbation scene, too.

MECH LOADOUTS

Here are some sample loadouts of three Mechs. All have been modified from their primary versions

ANNIHILATOR

CHASSIS DATA
ENGINE --> 21.5
HEAT SINKS --> 9.0
JUMP JETS --> 2.0
INTERNAL STRUCTURE --> 10.0
ARMOR --> 19.0
WEAPONS --> 35.0
AMMUNITION --> 2.0
EQUIPMENT --> 2.5
CURRENT TONNAGE --> 99.5
MAXIMUM --> 100.0

CURRENT LOAD-OUT
2 ER PPC (CLAN)
2 LRM 15 (CLAN) (240 rounds)
1 Pulse Laser (S) (CLAN)
5 Pulse Laser (M) (CLAN)
3 Pulse Laser (L) (CLAN)

19 Double Heat Sink
1 Artemis IV FCS (CLAN)
4 CASE (CLAN)

INTERNAL STRUCTURE --> Standard
MAX RUN SPEED --> 51.8

This sucker is built to take a punishment, and lots of it. With armor maxed out, it will usually have around 50 points center torso front. The 2 LRMS will start fights and sometimes knock down smaller mechs, which will prime them for a quick dual PPC blast, followed by the pulse lasers. The loadout could use more heat sinks in smaller, more crowded battles



MADCAT

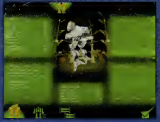
CHASSIS DATA
ENGINE --> 19.5
HEAT SINKS --> 4.0
JUMP JETS --> 1.0
INTERNAL STRUCTURE --> 4.0
ARMOR --> 12.0 (CLAN FF)
WEAPONS --> 22.0
AMMUNITION --> 6.0
EQUIPMENT --> 0.0
CURRENT TONNAGE --> 75.0
MAXIMUM --> 75.0

CURRENT LOAD-OUT
2 LRM 20 (CLAN) (240 rounds)
3 Pulse Laser (M) (CLAN)
2 Streak SRM6 (CLAN) (360 rounds)

14 Double Heat Sink
2 CASE (CLAN)
2 Jump Jets (CLAN)

INTERNAL STRUCTURE --> Endo-Steel
MAX RUN SPEED --> 81.0

The Madcat offers a great balance between power, armor and speed. It's a lot like the original Warhammer, down to its look and its default loadout. This version is effective at all ranges, but could probably use some more up-close punch. Don't forget that the LRMS can be deadly at short range, too, if your target is obliging enough to stand toe to toe with you



SUPERNOVA

CHASSIS DATA
ENGINE --> 24.5
HEAT SINKS --> 14.0
JUMP JETS --> 1.0
INTERNAL STRUCTURE --> 4.5
ARMOR --> 14.5 (CLAN FF)
WEAPONS --> 24.0
AMMUNITION --> 0.0
EQUIPMENT --> 0.0
CURRENT TONNAGE --> 89.5
MAXIMUM --> 90.0

CURRENT LOAD-OUT
6 ER Laser (L) (CLAN)

24 Double Heat Sink
2 CASE (CLAN)
2 Jump Jets (CLAN)

INTERNAL STRUCTURE --> Endo-Steel
MAX RUN SPEED --> 59.4

This is an incredible death dealer, but you need to have great aim to make it work. Having a super-light weapons load allows you to pour on the armor and the heat sinks, as well as boost the running speed almost 10 kph. Additionally, the lack of crits lets you support both FF armor and Endo-Steel internals. Link-fire your lasers in groups of three, and be selective. If you need a quick kill quickly group fire and cycle off two shots of three each. Be ready with emergency coolant





In an uncertain post-apocalyptic future, giant metal robots wage war. One Mech must rise up to save the blah, blah, blah ...



Get a load of this walking armored school bus, sucka!

MECH = SUPER BABE

Some characters in *Mech3* bear a striking resemblance to these babes (OK, it's just another feeble attempt to justify running babe pics. You complaining?)



Timing is everything in these intense tactical confrontations. When your Mech is shredded up, when you're out of ammo and about to critically overheat, when you hit that emergency coolant button, switch to lasers, twist the torso and get that killing shot to the head, you'll know what *MW3* is all about.

Customization is key, and you can totally change your approach to a mission's strategy by altering your Mech's loadout. Sometimes you might even want to change your Mech itself to a lighter or heavier chassis as the situation demands. The strategic richness of tinkering with all the options to squeeze in every last ton of armor and ammo onto your Mech adds great depth to the spectacular combat possibilities.

Here you can outthink the mission objectives by altering your approach. For instance, during one mission I was getting my ass kicked brutally and repeatedly, yet stubbornly and mindlessly using the same loadout (still in *X-Wing Alliance* mode, I guess). Then I had a burst of inspiration — something like "I know, I'll use LRMS!" This got me the usual confused looks from the other PCXL staffers. But I went in, changed my 2 ER lasers/4 SRMS to 2 LRMS/4 pulse lasers. The next go-round, I beat the crap out of that mission with no problem. Gotta love it! Speaking of customization, that is unfortunately the gist of *MechWarrior 3*'s multiplayer game.

Now, you're probably thinking, "Surely there are at least a few flaws?" Yeah, it has 'em, and on paper they look pretty major: Crappy token multiplayer (deathmatch only, no CTF, no co-op is a terrible ommission), repetitive missions, incoherent briefings, and a weak, uninvolving story. How 'bout the crippling bugs (now fixed) I ran into? But this is a game whose core gameplay — like *Quake II* — is so solid, fun, and ultimately addicting, that all those "flaws" fall by the wayside faster than 4 LRM 20s can reduce an Owens to a pile of molten slag. When it's over, you want more. When you fail a mission, you want to refit your Mech with the loadout you know *will* get the job done this time. *MW3* would be frustrating if the game were less fun, but failing is just a temporary setback and part of the learning process.

Bullet-point "feature" fixated developers take note: It's not about the license, who you can get to do the soundtrack, or how many polys you can push. It's about the gameplay. Other Mech-related franchises may as well cash in and ship, cuz from what we've seen, this round of the giant robot battle is decisively over.

— ED *"No Eights"* **LEE still hates writing his own bio**



There are some cool scripted events, like blow-uppable buildings.

GRAPHICS

The engine is absolutely first-rate. Mechs look more impressive than any giant robot by far. Great software mode too.

SOUND

Good sound design, but one small gripe, I wish the Mech sounds (footsteps, etc.) were louder.

DEPTH

Lotsa missions and multiplayer too, but the real depth is in the tactics and customization options.

DESIGN

If I knew how they made this game so fun, well I'd be on the other side of the fence wouldn't I?

RATING 9

Pluses

- → Solid, fun gameplay
- → Sweet, sweet graphics
- → Deep and complex tactics

Minuses

- → Missions get repetitive
- → Multiplayer is pretty limited
- → License is underused

PC ACCELERATOR JUNE 1999 Ed liked this game so much, he stayed home from E3 to write the review (sorta)

THIS AIN'T NO SKINS GAME.



Links LS EXTREME



How many times have you secretly wanted to drive the ball into the snooty VIP playing in front of you?

At Armadillo Al's Demolition Driving Range, you can turn robotic snobs into toast with atomic golf balls.



Have you ever put a silent curse on your opponent's next shot?

On the mystical **Mojo Bay Country Club**, you can curse your rival's shot and watch it corkscrew into a shark-infested water hazard.



Have you ever dreamed of giving your golf opponent a serious handicap with an exploding plasma ball? Let's be honest—we all have.

Live the dream by inviting your fiercest adversary to a game of Death Matchplay on the **Dimension X Battlefield!**

WWW.LINKSEXTREME.COM

ACCESS SOFTWARE INCORPORATED

Go to http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411. Product Number 70

DEVELOPER -->	Rebellion
PUBLISHER -->	Fox Interactive
REQUIRED -->	P200 MMX, 32MB RAM, 3D accelerator card, 128MB hard drive space
IDEAL -->	PII 400, 128MB RAM, Voodoo 2 or AGP TNT card

Aliens versus Predator

Because three is three times as nice

ACCELE-RATED

There's little if any visual quality difference, except of course the TNT can do higher resolutions than a single Voodoo 2. Either way, the game is smooth, fast, playable, and great looking. What more do you want?



API SUPPORT: Direct3D, Glide

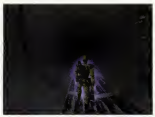
Using a great-looking buffed-up 3D engine that captures the atmosphere of the movies perfectly, Fox Interactive's *Aliens versus Predator* is a hell of a game. It's a balls-to-the-wall action alien simulator wrapped into a package that will scare the crap out of you almost the whole way through — not to mention frustrate the hell out of gamers everywhere to no end.

Almost three different games in one, *AvP* invites you to slip into one of three roles — the oral hygienically-challenged Xenomorph, the Colonial Marine, or the Predator. Remarkably, the developer, Rebellion, has been able to recreate a vastly different feel for all three races in a near perfect fashion. The Alien is almost surreal to play, with its slightly fish-eyed view, breakneck speed, and ability to run across any surface from floor to ceiling, while the Predator's toughness and power shine through above the puny humans, who must rely on faster weapons, armor, and decent speed to survive.

The game offers five Alien-based levels, and six each for the Predator and Marine (though the last level for both is a Queen Alien match). Five bonus levels for each race — basically reworked maps from the other campaigns — supplement the relatively short, but well thought-out campaigns.

The look, feel, sounds, textures, weapons — basically everything — have been ripped straight from the films, and it all works great. The Marine levels are pant-spoilingly intense at times, as you hear the Aliens scampering around you, falling from air ducts, and screeching to attack with only the blip of the motion sensor for comfort. The Predator levels span Alien hives and human installations, complete with motion-sensing guns, as he hunts down the United States' finest and the Xenomorphs. Aside from a normal human-like view, he has electrical-based vision for Alien hunting, thermal for humans, and then one for spotting fellow Predators (and his homing disk). He can also turn invisible, eating up his power source used to supply the electrical weapons and healing syringe.

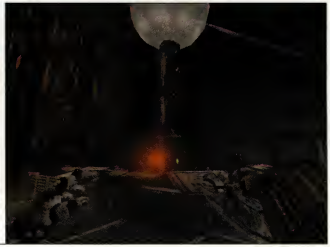
The Alien has three attacks — tail whip, claw strike, and a decapitating head bite that sucks health points out of the hapless target. It also has two vision modes, one for navigation in dark areas, the other for hunting, where humans appear in shimmering blue. It's a pure joy to be this classic enemy in such a faithful recreation of its abilities, scampering with stunning speed around the levels, and scaring the











Popping alien heads off with wrist blades is about the most entertaining frag there is.



It's the new and improved Alien snack!



Careful aim is not needed in this situation.

ANNOYING ALIENS



Alf

ALF
KNOWN FOR→ Crash-landing on Earth in the late '80s, eating cats, playing Bouffetaus-ball, and causing trouble for the Tanners
LEGACY→ Armed with a Golden Retriever named Fluffy and enslaved a horrific litter of muppet dogs



Mork from Ork

MORK FROM ORK
KNOWN FOR→: Spawning from a bad episode of "Happy Days," drinking with his finger, talking to plants, and never getting any lovin' from Mindy. "Shazbot!"
LEGACY→ Once Earthlings faintly tired of Mork's silly little quirks, he had no choice but to start using heroin, become a junkie, and live out his last days dirty, homeless, and smelling of urine



Jar Jar

JAR JAR
KNOWN FOR→ Fish-tipping his way across a galaxy far, far away, and being the downfall of *Episode One*
LEGACY→ Continued his downward spiral and became a poorly-animated character on a Saturday morning cartoon, "The Adventures of Jar Jar"



Cheech Marin

CHEECH MARIN
KNOWN FOR→ Claiming to be *Born in East L.A.*, smoking large amounts of marijuana, getting high, rolling joints, doing bong loads, and saying "Waatsappenin'?!"
LEGACY→ He has gotten old, quit smoking, and now hangs out on a house boat with that guy from "Miami Vice"

crap out of every soul. Supporting the sense of abject terror is the realtime lighting (each light source can be destroyed — a useful multiplayer tactic when fighting marines) and the enemy AI, where Aliens attack in packs and squads of marines work together. Character design and animation is fantastic, with intricate body part-sensitive hits that are so refined you can shoot the fingers off an Alien and cut its tail in two. Predators can't be dismembered, but humans certainly can, although they die instantly, whereas Aliens will try to keep on coming, spewing their acidic blood.

As a challenge, the game is bitterly hard, and there is no option to save at all during a mission, which is insane. While a standard quick-save would have diced the atmosphere, waypoint saves in some of the bigger levels (especially the Alien levels) would have prevented some of the frustration of having to play whole levels over in order to proceed to the next. Multiplayer is incredibly fun with several different race and team-based games. Multiple Marines against one Predator is a great challenge, and with its generally commendable Internet performance, reason enough to buy this great game.

Had the main campaigns been longer with more reasonable save options, this would have been a near perfect game. It does everything else right — the graphics and pulsating sound are top notch, the atmosphere is thick enough to cut, the gameplay is exceptional, and the action and feel for each character is dead-on to the movies.

Unfortunately, while there's a sense of accomplishment when completing the missions, that feeling can be subdued by the frustration of having taken too many tries to succeed. Regardless, *AvP* is highly recommended, and offers some of the most intense, distinctive, and downright frightening action ever on a PC.

***— JASON D'APRILE** is a magnet far attracting Alien Queen Bitches. Odd, since he's a very nice guy*



This is what we refer to as an idiot optimist. However, some of us refer to all optimists as idiots.

GRAPHICS

Detailed, exceptionally animated characters, great lighting effects, and really nice looking levels, thanks to an engine that's somewhere between *Quake II* and *Unreal*, in terms of visual flare and goodies.

SOUND

Spooky, atmospheric, and ripped right from the movies, although only EAX 3D sound is currently supported.

DEPTH

The three characters are vastly different, with very unusual levels and tactics. Also, the multiplayer variety is quite impressive.

DESIGN

Solid level design with incredible atmosphere and suspense, but the levels are often rather linear, and hellishly hard at times.

RATING 8

Pluses

→ Incredible atmosphere
→ Great control
→ Intensely frightening gameplay

Minuses

→ No save option during a level
→ Therefore, it's friggin' hard
→ Though it may sound masochistic, I want more levels!

DEVELOPER -->	Team 17
PUBLISHER -->	Microprose
REQUIRED -->	P100, 32MB RAM, 4x CD-ROM, 33MB hard drive
IDEAL -->	P133, 64MB RAM

Worms Armageddon

Captivating violence in a pleasantly cartoonish, consequence-free environment

ACCELE-RATED

No. And if that keeps you from buying this game, then you're a dumb-ass. no matter what this magazine may be called.

OTHER WORMS

Microprose isn't the only place to find dangerously antisocial worms. Here is a quick survey of some other worms of which to be wary

DENNIS RODMAN
WHERE IT'S FOUND--> Sometimes on NBA courts, otherwise drunk in Vegas wedding booth
ODD HABITS--> Wears women's clothes, occasionally marries self
VIOLENT TENDENCIES--> Assaults photographers, bricks free throws

DUNE WORM
WHERE IT'S FOUND--> The planet Dune
ODD HABITS--> Is "the spice"
VIOLENT TENDENCIES--> Springs from desert to consume humans of the far future

CAENORHABDITIS ELEGANS
WHERE IT'S FOUND--> Rivers, then human urethra
ODD HABITS--> Swimming up urethra and then multiplying
VIOLENT TENDENCIES--> Jesus, man! Swimming up urethras!



Everyone's favorite pee-hole worm

Here's the good news: *Worms Armageddon* is a lot like *Worms 2*. The bad news is that it's a *lot* like *Worms 2*. The official line from Microprose is that it "uses an enhanced *Worms 2* engine," but in reality, there are no significant differences in the engine at all. Not that that's a bad thing — even if the game is a 2D combination of side-scroller and turn-based strategy.

Now, many gamers have a simple formula: 2D + Side-Scroller + Turn-Based Strategy = Craptastrophe. But they merely need to be educated. Believe it or not, this formulaic strategy game offers more death, malice, destruction, and hilarity than almost any 3D shooter. *Worms Armageddon* is pure apocalyptic entertainment.

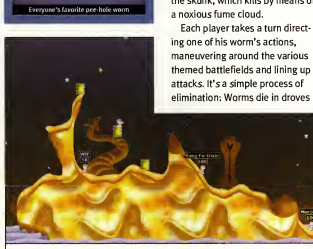
Gameplay could not be simpler, nor could it be any deeper, strategically speaking. You command a team of four to eight worms — that's right, worms — in worm civil war, fought with a dizzying array of weapons. The arsenal from *Worms 2* is back, allowing such murderous attacks as exploding sheep, and the devastating holy hand grenade. New weapons include the axe, flamethrower, laser targeting sight (for improved accuracy), and the skunk, which kills by means of a noxious fume cloud.

Each player takes a turn directing one of his worm's actions, maneuvering around the various themed battlefields and lining up attacks. It's a simple process of elimination: Worms die in droves until one team is wiped out. And the worm carnage is truly apocalyptic. Worms get blown to bits by mines and banana clusterbombs. They get shotgunned in the head, riddled with Uzis, doused in napalm, dynamited, sunk, hit with mortar shells, and beaten to death with karate chops.

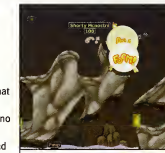
And all the while, the worms are laughing their asses off with a couple dozen team voice sets, for a comical variety of in-combat commentary. The military voice set swipes admonishments from *Full Metal Jacket*, while the Italian set provides worm samples of classic Al Pacino gangster diatribes. The glee with which these worms mete out the ultimate punishment — and the pitiful death throes with which they expire — never cease to entertain.

(*It is worth noting that several reputable studies have shown conclusive proof that worms exposed to this game become prone to real-world worm violence. This game is not intended for worms under the age of 18, and legislation is now being proposed that would bon this game from gordens, riverbanks, greenhouses, and ather oreos with moistened dirt.*)

The additions to the game are largely matters of quantity, not quality. There are now 30 maps on which to fight, around 20 new weapons, and a few new rules like 2x-damage power-ups and reinforcements. The best addition is WORMNet, an online matching service that will hook you up to a fight in seconds and includes a ranking system for bragging rights.



When you've got a four-second timer, you need to lob the pineapple quickly.





It WAS a lone gunman on the grassy knoll!

Warms Armageddon isn't a huge leap beyond its predecessor, but if you were one of those people who couldn't get enough of the last one, you'll be well served by it.

— DANIEL MORRIS *is consistently beaten to the autside by Mike Solmon's frightening stutter-step drive to the hoop*

GRAPHICS

Brilliant simplicity. Expressive worms and their grisly deaths rendered in a colorful cartoon world.

SOUND

Dozens of hilarious sets of worm team voices and exclamations, plus ability to add your own.

DEPTH

It's amazing to see how much strategy goes into a homicidal orgy of worm-killing.

DESIGN

Simple and satisfying. Worms, weapons, and other assorted genocidal goodies to keep the gameplay constantly fresh.

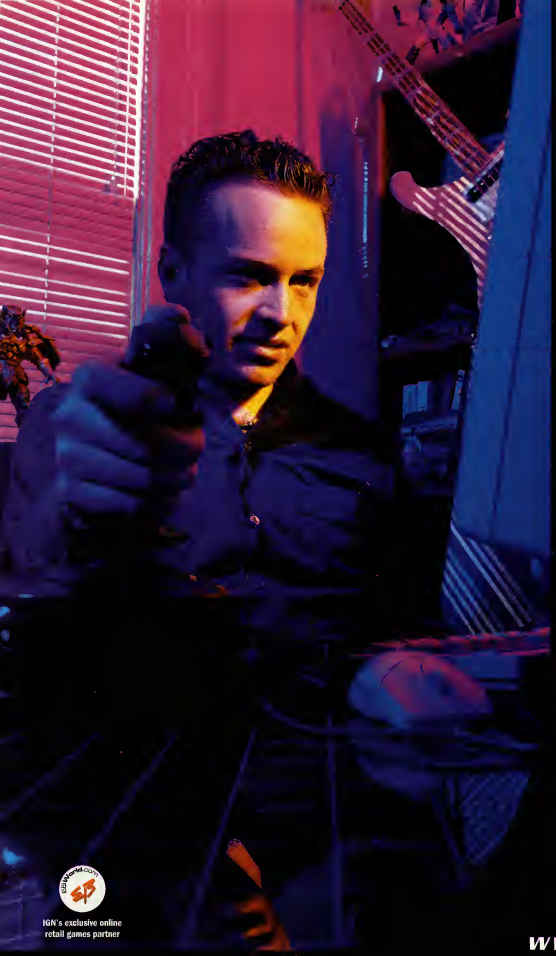
RATING 7

Pluses

--> Genuinely funny
--> Highly customizable
--> You won't soon tire of it

Minuses

--> Not a whole lot different from *Worms 2*
--> Some boring maps
--> Friends' reactions when you say "I got *Worms*"



TODAY i AM:

1. GETTING GAME NEWS
2. READING PREVIEWS AND REVIEWS
3. DOWNLOADING DEMOS
4. COPYING CODES AND STRATEGIES
5. DOWNLOADING SKINS AND PATCHES
6. FINDING WHAT I'M WANTING AT IGN.COM

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pc games videogames movies tv sci-fi

DEVELOPER →	Microprose
PUBLISHER →	Hasbro
REQUIRED →	P90, 16MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM, 50MB hard drive
IDEAL →	PII 350, 64MB RAM, 180MB Hard Drive, A3D sound card

RollerCoaster Tycoon

Hang on for the ride of your life (err ... sim-life, that is)

ACCELE-RATED

No 3D card is needed, since you can't ride your creations in first-person mode. But if you really want to enjoy this game, be sure to have at least a PII 266. The bigger your park becomes, the more slow-down you'll encounter when scrolling around.

BEST (AND WORST)

Grading rollercoasters is a purely subjective affair, but these are some of the coasters widely accepted as the best in the world, and one that's not

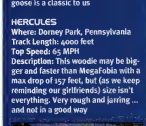
MAGNUM XL-200
Where: Cedar Point, Ohio
Track Length: 5106 feet
Top Speed: 72 MPH
Description: The world's first hypercoaster has a 60 degree first drop of 195 feet. Urban legend says that it is sinking into Lake Erie ... it's not

MEGAFOBIA
Where: Oakland Park, South Wales
Track Length: 3200 feet
Top Speed: 55 MPH
Description: Europe's largest wooden rollercoaster, it is also considered to be one of the most intense in the world, with a max drop height of 83 feet at a 55 degree angle

APOLLO'S CHARIOT
Where: Busch Gardens, Virginia
Track Length: 4882 feet
Top Speed: 73 MPH
Description: Even with a max drop of 210 feet and a 4.1 max G-force, it's too new for the votes to be tallied on this steel coaster. But anything that wallops Fabio on the nose with a goose is a classic to us



HERCULES
Where: Dorney Park, Pennsylvania
Track Length: 4000 feet
Top Speed: 65 MPH
Description: This woodie may be bigger and faster than MegaFobia with a max drop of 157 feet, but (as we keep reminding our girlfriends) size isn't everything. Very rough and jarring ... and not in a good way



If you're a fan of rollercoasters or sims, stop reading and buy this game. Just trust this self-confessed rollercoaster junkie — you'll love it. Now go ... shoo! What are you waiting for, an engraved invitation?

The rest of you may need some prodding. Sim games aren't very high on the "cool" list and, to some, neither are rollercoasters. Generally, games with a "sim" or "tycoon" in the title put me to sleep in minutes. (I say those little simizens should fend for themselves! Anarchy rules!) Previous games with a similar slant didn't change that opinion. *Theme Park* was too childish and Disney's *Caaster* too limited. But developer Microprose has gotten it right with *RallerCoaster Tycaan*, an immersive, addictive game well worth every cent of its sub-$30 price tag.

Like all *Tycaan* games, *RT* is a management sim. Though building rollercoasters is the big draw, overseeing an amusement park is the real game. *RT* includes 19 scenarios (although only the first five are available at startup) covering environments as diverse as forests, deserts, and beaches, with tasks ranging from building an original park to expanding an established one. Improving the park's value, hosting a required minimum of guests, and maintaining a good park rating is the set game, but they're more like friendly suggestions. If you fail your objectives, the scenario doesn't stop. Potentially, you can run your park into the ground or make it a hit. But meet your goals and it opens up new scenarios and, consequently, new challenges. (More scenarios beyond the original 19 are available from the official website.) As boss, you have nearly total control — paths, vendors, advertising campaigns, and, of course, rides are placed, bought, sold, hired, fired, etc. by your bad-ass omniscient self.

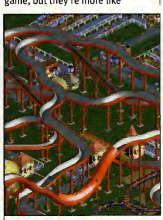
Ah, but the real game is all about rides, specifically you-know-whats. You start with an assortment of stock rides in categories like transport (trains, monorails), mild (merry-go-round, ferris wheel), thrill (spin-n-spews, freefalls), water (log flumes, canoes, slides), and rollercoasters (steel, woodies, mine trains, etc.). They can then be manipulated in some way — by color, number of cars, height, and load requirements. But the fun is in designing your own ride from scratch. Despite its name, would-be designers aren't limited to rollercoasters; transport rides, water rides and hedge mazes can be created entirely from your own twisted imagination ... as long as you have enough money to pay for it all. Over time, your R&D team introduces new rides, enhancements, decor options, and stands, but only if you pay them. Best of all, any coaster you can dream up can be cloned and improved.



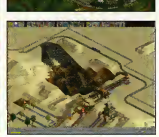
Ran out of room? No prob — you can build on water.

One complaint: Sim-people are idiots. Guests run around in a blind panic when presented with an open courtyard and mechanics visit every ride except the one needing repair. In any event, *RT* is a ride you won't want to stop.

— CHUCK OSBORN *is a praud member of Caaster Enthusiasts*







PCXL Acres, home of Ed Lee's "Uncomfortable Wetness."

GRAPHICS

Realistic graphics and animations make *RT* look like a miniature of the real thing.

SOUND

Fantastic. Accurate sounds (coaster whooshes, flushing toilets) and music set a festive mood.

DEPTH

It's up to you. Manage one park for months, breeze through the scenarios, or concentrate on building your dream coaster.

DESIGN

Epitomizes the adage "easy to learn, difficult to master." You're limited only by resources and your imagination.

RATING 8

Pluses

- → Unwavering attention to detail
- → Cheaper than admission to most real theme parks
- → Designing coasters rocks

Minuses

- → Staff and guest AI sucks
- → R&D needed for things that should be readily available
- → Can't ride coasters in first-person

In 2015 war is declared.

YOU ARE THE U.S.

- Intelligence reports a Chinese ground unit.
- Switch to tactical mode. Ready helicopters.
- Command flight over a Chinese tank platoon.
- Destroy two tanks. Helicopters are damaged.
- Move to strategic mode and set way points on the map
- Engage artillery to the North. Launch an air strike to the East.
- Switch to platoon commander of an electronic warfare unit.

VICTORY IS IMMINENT.

YOU ARE CHINA

- Mobilize armored unit into Kazakhstan.
- Lay minefields in tactical mode.
- Move to maps. Conduct reconnaissance.
- Mobilize antiaircraft weaponry. Launch air offensive to the North.
- Two tanks are destroyed by U.S. helicopters.
- Return to maps. View U.S. artillery enter minefield.
- Switch to helicopter platoon commander. Head East.

VICTORY IS IMMINENT.



FORCE 21



A real-time 3-D TACTICAL WARGAME as intense as RAINBOW SIX and war itself.

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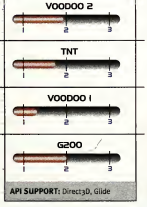
DEVELOPER --> Sonalyst
PUBLISHER --> Jane's/EA
REQUIRED --> P200 with MMX, 32MB RAM, 3D accelerator card, 8x CD-ROM, 61MB disk space
IDEAL --> PII 300, 64MB RAM, Voodoo or TNT-based 3D card, 325MB disk space

Fleet Command

A good game to read a book by

ACCELE-RATED

That little 3D action window means that even hardcore strategy heads are going to have to stump up. All cards are supported through Direct3D, plus there is specific Glide support. We found Voodoo-based cards most effective, but the 3D effects won't traumatize your ATI card too severely.



API SUPPORT: Direct3D, Glide

Would you like it if I just gave this game a score with no explanation of what it means or how I arrived at that number? No? Well, it would be apropos, because that's how *Fleet Command* treats the player. There's little explanation for the scores you receive at the end of a scenario -- all you get is an overall mission rating with a list of allied losses, enemies killed, and enemies still breathing. Without explanation, those three hours you've just spent on a scenario are lost, as you discover that you're one percentage point below what's needed to continue. No pointers to what you did wrong, or hints on what to try in the replay.

That's unforgivable in a game like *Fleet Command*, a realtime simulation of modern naval combat featuring four campaigns and 32 single missions, set in real-world locations with a plausible plotline. The object is to prevent, by any means necessary, WWIII (a.k.a. global nuclear war) by cooling off military hotspots from the Indian Ocean to the Kuril Islands. As commander of the U.S. carrier task force, you're up against a wide range of Indian, Chinese, and Russian ships, subs, and aircraft.

Combat occurs in realtime, meaning you point and click your forces around a 2D map while your enemies do the same. This may sound like a bit of a yawner (and in truth it is, but more on that in a bit), but *Fleet Command* has one major card up its sleeve: A 3D viewing window of any object in the game. Tell a destroyer to fire a long-range ship-to-ship missile at an enemy, and you can watch it fly all the way to the target. Some 150 different ships, subs, and aircraft are modeled, so there's always something interesting to watch blow up.

On the surface, *Fleet Command*'s combination of real-world situations, modern naval weaponry and tactics, and the one-two punch of 2D strategy and 3D visuals is quite compelling. And it seems to paint an accurate umbrella view of what present-day naval combat is all about. In fact, several television news programs enlisted the game as a visual aid for stories about Operation Desert Fox.

The unfortunate part is, once you get into the strategy portion of the game, and the initial rush of the 3D quotient wears off, *Fleet Command* can be a real snoozer, often for reasons that aren't necessarily design problems.





This is about as exciting as the game video gets.



If you get bored you can always sink a fishin' boat or two.

The Kuril Islands are an archipelago lying in a line between Japan and Russia



If you get really bored, it's great fun (for a while) to watch things blow up in the 3D window.

Modern naval combat is typified by long-range engagements. *Fleet Command* models this well as you exchange missile barrages with enemies hundreds of miles away, until each and every enemy craft and installation is wiped off the map. What it also models well is the fact that the U.S. Navy is so far and away the most superior naval fighting force on Earth, that the battles aren't anything close to challenging. Some of the single missions may make you sweat a drop or two, but the campaigns (four very similar linked scenarios) were a very disappointing breeze.

When you start you'll often find a wave (or waves) of enemy cruise missiles heading towards your fleet. For about 10-20 minutes you're furiously pointing and clicking anti-missile missiles about the map until the threat is gone. Then you send out scout planes to locate and identify radar contacts, which you then attack with ship-based missiles and/or aircraft. Airports and other land-based targets may also figure as objectives.

Now you send scout planes to find and eliminate all threats that may be posed by submarines — a task similar to searching for the proverbial needle in the haystack — and almost as much fun. In two of the four campaigns I had every enemy contact on the map destroyed but one sub, which then took me an hour or more to find. I launched my search aircraft, gave them areas of the map to search, and then sat back and read a book until the damn sub was located and dispatched.

Accurate? Realistic? Maybe, but it's certainly not fun. To make it more frustrating, I found submarines largely useless. Your own subs are often too far away from the action to be much use, and enemy subs never seem to pose a threat; they simply play hide and seek until you kill them.

Much of the overall frustration is exacerbated by what is definitely the worst documentation ever for a Jane's product. About 20 percent of the puny supplied 45-page manual is devoted to very basic game instructions, with the bulk centered on how to use the mission editor. A decent weapons encyclopedia and object database is on the CD, as well as several mission tutorials, but these do not excuse the fact that the manual is a complete joke. For instance, it lists shortcut keyboard commands to say, add an air corridor, but it doesn't explain why you'd want to do this. (I never figured it out myself.) There's not even a separate keycard for reference while playing, which is also usually a Jane's staple.

But even that is topped on the frustration scale by buggy combat result reporting. In one campaign scenario I had to wipe out three enemy airports — which I did to the point that they were removed off of the map and listed as kills in the status screen. However, that same status screen listed the third and final airport as "not destroyed." Say what – how can it be killed but not destroyed? So I had to replay three hours to do it again before discovering that I used allied forces to destroy this particular airport, rather than elements of my task force. When I went back and destroyed it with my carrier planes, there was no problem. Talk about lame!

Initially, I liked *Fleet Command* very much. But the more I played, the more elements cropped up to frustrate me. The included mission editor and online play may make up for these flaws for the true naval grognards out there just hankering for this type of game. For the rest of us, there's *Starcraft*.

— *While playing* Fleet Command, **STEVE KLETT** *finished* **Moby Dick** *(not the classic comic version)*

PRECISION, MY ASS



"...and WWIII was begun by accident."

In light of the recent accidental targeting of the China embassy, we wondered exactly what guidance systems they have on these so-called "precision guided missiles"

THE WWIII SPECIAL → Targets the embassy of the biggest, most dangerous, most easily pissed-offable country in the world and blows the shit out of it

THE ROSIE BREAKER → Seeks out the most annoying talk show, then destroys studio, including live studio audience

THE E3 ENDER → Looks for the games convention with the most excess, phoniness, and self-congratulation and levels it. Geek casualties high

THE PETROLEUM DEFENDER → On standby at all times to launch whenever a Middle Eastern country threatens supply of oil to U.S.

INNOCENT ETHNIC BLOWER-UPPER → Only targets peaceful civilians in said countries, at locations such as hospitals and apartment buildings

THE FLIGHT 800 → Launched by bored crews of battleships, these target civilian airplanes flying over Long Island



Heyl You sunk my battleship!



The in-game ship database in *Fleet Command* is excellent.

GRAPHICS

Average from start to finish — even the flashy 3D elements get old after their first few passes.

SOUND

Very good positional sound effects.

DEPTH

Surprisingly shallow for a Jane's title — their reputation precedes them and we expect more.

DESIGN

Feels like modern naval combat as we assume modern naval combat to be (from the CNN government-doctored reports).

RATING 5

Pluses

- → Mission editor included
- → Wide range of ships, weapons, aircraft
- → 3D view is cool

Minuses

- → Documentation sucks eggs
- → Enemy AI is not very aggressive
- → Buggy mission-result reporting

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PC CD-ROM

TEEN T AGES 13+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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Go to http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411: Product Number 101

DEVELOPER --> Westwood Studios
PUBLISHER --> Westwood Studios
REQUIRED --> P166, 32MB RAM, 450MB disk space, 4X CD-ROM, DirectSound-compatible sound card, Direct X 6-compatible video card
IDEAL --> P200, 64MB RAM, Voodoo- or TNT-based 3D accelerator

Lands Of Lore III

The LOL acronym has hardly ever been more appropriate — sadly

ACCELE-RATED

The game performed equally unspectacularly in D3D on a TNT AGP card and in Glide on a Voodoo2 SLI configuration. Frame rates were decent on both, but the visuals and special effects weren't noteworthy on either.

VOODOO 2



TNT



API SUPPORT: Direct 3D, Glide

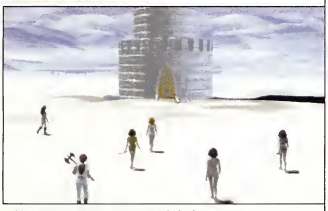
There's a definite market for roleplaying games that are big on action and adventure and less concerned with experience points. While *Lands Of Lore III*'s gameplay style certainly fits into this category, it descends into a love/hate appreciation. In fact, make that a "sort-of-liked-at-rare-moments/hated" type of relationship.

Pitched into the role of Copper LeGre, the bastard son of Eric LeGre (brother to King Richard himself), you're blighted by "issues." Not only are you a bastard, but you're a half-breed bastard — it seems your human father had a fetish for Dracoid barmaids. So, the good people of Gladstone are less than enthused when Eric and his sons are slain by supernatural beasts, leaving you the sole surviving heir to Richard's throne. However, opportunity knocks with the chance to win them over by saving Gladstone from the strange beasts that have entered the land via five magic portals, which you will have to close. Oh yeah, you have to find your soul along the way too ... don't ask.





A not-quite-linear progression lets you bumble your way into the major quests and sub-plots. It's up to you what guilds to join: Warrior, Wizard, Cleric, or Thief (choose the latter — you get to stab people in the back and take their money), as well as what quests to accept,



Babes going to pray to the PCXL gods for layouts in the next issue.



Is that a pig or a rock attacking you — sometimes it's hard to tell.

what areas to explore first, and what Familiar (magical beings that assist you in your travels) to bring along. Each guild supplies a familiar with different capabilities, but I never found much use for them.

In addition to vast environs to explore, there are tons of different spells (70), weapons (60), and items (100) to discover. Sadly, the *LOL* series' constant struggle with a flexible inventory falls short again. Frequent delimmas like deciding if you want to keep the Mana Foil you just found at the expense of throwing away that pork chop you've been saving for lunch, make the game extremely frustrating. Though the interface is pretty slick, making it easy to swap, use, and equip items, as well as call up your spell book or automap on the fly, the customizable control scheme is still clumsy, whatever variation you try.

LOL3 is built with an "enhanced" version of the game engine used for *LOL2*, and that had the charm, grace, and style of Linda Tripp. Consequently, *LOL3* feels like it should have come out three years ago (ironic, since the same criticism was pitched at *LOL2*). Sure, there's 3D support, which results in smoother textures, better frame rates, and acceptable special effects. But the support is buggy and technically there's not much that makes you go "wow." Instead you're often saying "What the hell is that? A pig, a person, or an ice cream truck?" The voxel-based game characters are downright ugly up close.

LOL3 is a big game with a decent story, moments of humor, and lots to discover. However, its dated technology, bugs (including several unexplained fatal crashes at critical moments), and controls make this dungeon-crawler want to return to better RPG fare, such as *Baldur's Gate*.

—When not playing games,* STEVE KLETT *is out trying to locate a Drocaid barmaid for our own Ed Lee

GRAPHICS
A 3D facelift can't belie *LOL3*'s downright ugly origins.

SOUND
Decent musical score that changes at dramatic moments. Average sound effects overall.

DEPTH
There's loads of gameplay for those with the stomach to discover it.

DESIGN
More action/adventure than RPG.

RATING 4

Pluses
- Lots of spells, weapons, and items
- Lots of voxel babes to find
- Big game

Minuses
- Sloppy controls
- Tired technology
- Buggy


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DEVELOPER --›	Activision
PUBLISHER --›	Activision
REQUIRED --›	P90, 16MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM, 250MB hard drive, 2MB video card
IDEAL --›	P200, 64MB RAM, 8X CD-ROM, 550MB hard drive, 28.8 modem for Internet play

Civilization: Call to Power

The continuing thrashing of the *Civilization* franchise

ACCELE-RATED

There's no need to go for the 3D effects. This 2D world is richer than the original *Civilization*, but not a big drag on the factory-installed video card you may be unlucky enough to still have.

OTHER CALLS









Hmm ar.. a few kinds of calls we here at **PCXL** are all too familiar with

COLLECT CALL --› "Hello, Mom? It's Dan. Dan! Your son, Dan! I think I've met my life partner and I want to tell you about her" (Use p. 105)

CAT CALL --› "Hey, b-biz, get out of that SDO booth. I've got a "spudnik" Uprising I want to show you"

ROLL CALL --› "Leo? Ed Leo? Anybody? Leo?"

BOOTY CALL --› "Gil? Hey, it's Hector. I know we don't work together anymore, but I thought I could come over and screw around with you a bit. You know what I mean"

The *Civilization* franchise has had many faces over the years. After Microprose added multiplayer to their existing game, Sid Meier and Brian Reynolds released an other-worldly (and highly unofficial) continuation of *Civilization* called *Alpha Centauri* (April **PCXL**). Activision's take is larger than life, sporting radically new graphics and units that bring some desperately needed sarcastic humor to a game that is more than just another sequel. Numerous similarities to the original *Civilization* are evident, but a drastically different interface allows for more detailed management of cities, a higher variety of resources to gather, and plenty of new units.

Even the movement of units in *Coll to Power* is different than that of Sid and Brian's *Civilization*, and can be assigned through waypoints that can be queued for upcoming turns. While the waypoints replace the arrow keys and allow you to assign movement orders for several turns in advance, it doesn't always work. Without keen overseeing, units can move to the wrong place, or worse, the wrong unit can be moved and thus waste its turn.

Management of cities is also quite different from the *Civilization* you've come to know and love. Now you can check on the progress of each city by hitting the city manager button, which allows administrative changes to any city without disrupting the view on the larger map. By keeping intrusions from other screens to a minimum, the new interface helps to create more seamless gameplay. On the downside, there can be just too much micromanaging, making *Coll to Power* seem like "Sim-ilization." While die-harders may enjoy this, it almost crosses the line to "work."

Civilization gets unexpectedly surreal with the inclusion of occupations such as slavers, abolitionists, and even the dreaded lawyer. The biggest downside to these units is that they can change the balance of play all too quickly. While the developers may take some heat for the inclusion of (historically accurate) slavers, they went overboard with the lawyers and televangelists, as the game simply doesn't need these units. Some good decisions have been made, however. Setter units now have just one purpose — to found new cities — while the task of improving individual tiles comes from the public works, which more realistically facilitates the civilization's overall production efforts.

Sadly, all the interface streamlining comes undone with a pop-up window depicting the battles, hindering that smooth flow. Here the old system wasn't broken and shouldn't have been fixed.

Coll to Power does have quicker gameplay and can be played from start to finish in an evening or two, but that streamlining also seems to have removed a lot of depth. The plodding adventures through history are now a lot faster, even as they add new wonders and more options for victory. At its worst, *Coll to Power* is overly "p.c." — even ancient civilizations worry about pollution, something that New Jersey only discovered last year.



One less enemy city to deal with.

— ENID BURNS *is woiting for the massively multiplayer version of* Call to Power *where your turn comes oround only once o doy*

GRAPHICS

Diverse selection of unit animation but too many extremely annoying terrain markers.

SOUND

Lame world music soundtrack, and unit's comments get old way too fast.

DEPTH

I won't be back to the original *Civilization* for a while.

DESIGN

A somewhat revamped original with new angles to make things work a little better.

RATING

Pluses

- Improved management of cities
- Quicker gameplay
- Multiple victory conditions

Minuses

- Unnecessary units
- Lots of micromanaging
- Complex movement interface



Good rulers will be rewarded with a kick-ass capital. But overall, the improvements don't bring a much better game.

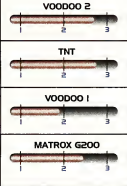
DEVELOPER →	Psygnosis
PUBLISHER →	Psygnosis
REQUIRED →	P166, 32MB RAM, 2MB hard drive, 3D accelerator card
IDEAL →	PII 350, 64MB RAM, 245MB hard drive, AGP 3D card, Dolby Digital DVD 5.1 sound system

Lander

I love to feel pain!

ACCELE-RATED

It's a game all about the look. On a TNT, *Lander* exhibited sharp, detailed graphics with excellent terrain and lighting effects. The lighting is particularly strong, with realtime effects glowing clearly on TNT and Voodoo-based cards. Performance was generally high on both formats.

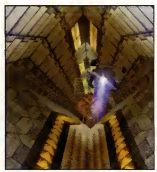


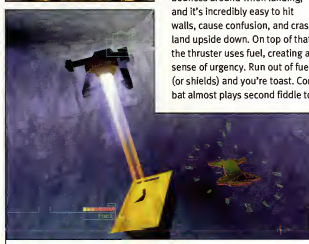
API SUPPORT: Direct3D, Glide

Some games just seem to define the crappy, middle of the road, non-saying "you'll love it or loathe it." *Lander* is one. And the loathing part is likely to be particularly prevalent if you're sick of the endless flood of "me-too" first- and third-person action adventures. Ironically, that isn't to say this isn't a good game. *Lander* is actually distinctive, engaging, and almost intellectually stimulating — when it isn't making you pull your hair out and spew forth mountains of profanity.

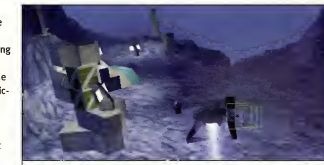
To call *Lander* a finesse game is more than a slight understatement. This is a thrust physics-based game, and that's both its most appealing gimmick and its biggest problem. Essentially a 3D, third-person perspective remake of the classic *Lunar Lander* games that were rampant long ago, the game is primarily mouse controlled. Push the mouse forward to nose down, back to nose up, and left and right to tilt in those directions, while using a large thruster on the *Lander*'s underbelly to create actual momentum.

This physics model is extremely exacting, and since your craft reacts at the whim of gravity, you're constantly falling unless you're thrusting. The vehicle bounces around when landing, and it's incredibly easy to hit walls, cause confusion, and crash-land upside down. On top of that, the thruster uses fuel, creating a sense of urgency. Run out of fuel (or shields) and you're toast. Combat almost plays second fiddle to the issue of controlling your craft. Ships, gun turrets, and missile batteries are destroyed with a range of upgradeable weapons. Complete a mission to save some poor soul and it turns out his cousin runs the repair shop and will cut you a deal.





Tractor-beaming objects around is a big part of this game.



Hey, I can see my house from here!

Exert the time and effort necessary to manipulate the controls successfully and *Lander* gets pretty much all of its very simple premise right. The game places you as a freelance pilot who takes jobs via e-mail, usually involving salvaging something illegal or covert. With around 30 missions — many of them extremely long — there's plenty to do, and the game weaves itself around an interestingly fleshed-out future setting, with e-mails from news, family, and employer sources that keep the world breathing. Upgrading your Lander (or even buying new ones) is part of the goal, and it's important to refuel and fix shields between missions as well.

Both the graphics and sound are excellent. The planets have smoothly contoured, beautifully rendered landscapes, and include both subterranean and topside locales. The Lander itself is well detailed and lighting effects are top-notch. The DVD version sports impressive Dolby 5.1 sound, but even the normal CD version has incredible sound (utilizing Aureal and EAX), and both versions are included in the one box.

If you can put up with the frustration inherent with the thrust-based controls, *Lander* is actually a very cool, challenging game. Just keep your calm should the fury start to well, and the angst begin to surface.

— JASON D'APRILE *is much better at "thrusting maneuvers" than mast people give him credit for*

GRAPHICS

Typical Psygnosis flair. Great lighting, and superb landscape mapping.

SOUND

Top-notch, especially for users of PCI sound cards. Great sound effects, cool music.

DEPTH

Takes practice and precision to fly through the many missions, in addition to an interesting, fleshed out story and ship maintenance options.

DESIGN

The missions are often long and arduous, but well designed to take advantage of the unique properties of the craft you fly.

RATING



Pluses

- → Excellent graphics, with very interesting landscapes
- → Great sound
- → Engaging, long levels for a different sort of challenge

Minuses

- → Frustrating control
- → Low fuel? Can't they use f—king fusion engines in the future?
- → Physics too extreme for most

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"Stomach-turningly perverse."
– PC Format



"Beneath contempt."
– UK Police Federation

"Controversial, hip and louder than a Spice Girl in a blender."
– GamesMansion.com







This is the original, uncut, full version of Grand Theft Auto, fully tricked out with the all-new GTA London: 1969 Mission Pack. It's more fast cars, more dangerous streets, and more cops to outrun and outwit than ever before. Now you can tear through three of America's toughest cities, plus the mean streets of London, leaving a trail of mowed-down mercenaries, hired killers, and rival gang members in your outlaw wake. All of the wild car chase action of the original is here, times two. Please, while it may be tempting, just don't steal this game.

Published by
GATHERING DEVELOPER

www.godgames.com



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Go to http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411: Product Number 98

DIRECTOR'S CUT

Bare Essentials

or "That's all you had to say"

Add-on packs often appear to further enhance the longevity of full price games. They can also act as thinly-veiled extensive patches, and provide a chance to get into the game all those things that were initially promised, but have since been forgotten about. Or they may be the product that you've been eagerly waiting for. Bare Essentials will give you the, er, bare essentials on these packs and a variety of add-ons and additions.



Those "portly" (a pun!) little settlers are back.



***Half-Life* gets a new and better life with *TFC*.**



Bloody well-designed, but doomed for bargain bins.

THE SETTLERS III MISSION CD

WHAT IS IT?

Here we have the official expansion pack for *The Settlers III*, a realtime strategy game that's populated with those adorable little pudgy settling types of folks. In it, you take charge of one of three races: Romans, Egyptians, or Asians, all fighting for control of the world.

WHAT IT ADDS

The biggest addition is the inclusion of *The Settlers III* Level Editor, allowing you to create your own single- and multiplayer maps. There are also eight new missions for each race and ten new multiplayer maps.

IS IT WORTH IT?

The easy to use (if a bit oversimplified) level editor will let you create hours and hours of non-stop settling fun, while the new single player missions offer more of the same, albeit at a slightly higher difficulty setting.

The only downside is that the story (if you can call it that) behind all this settling sucks the big wazoo. So unlike *StarCraft* (which had a cool story driving the game forward), here you really don't give a rat's ass about the bigger picture. But for the price, you can't complain too much. Of course, if you had enough settling the first time around, you'll want to save your 20 bucks and leave this one on the shelf.

WHAT IT COSTS

Price: $19.99

RATING 6

TEAM FORTRESS CLASSIC

WHAT IS IT?

A port of the original *Team Fortress* fan (now Valve employee)-created mod for *Quake*. *TFC* is an expansion for *Half-Life* and features squad-based multiplayer combat. There are a variety of different game types in *TFC*, including Capture the Flag, Hunted, and Command Points.

WHAT IT ADDS

The multiplayer game that shipped with *Half-Life* was piss-poor; *TFC* addresses that shortcoming very nicely. The different character classes (gunner, medic, spy, grenadier, etc.) let you match your playing skills with the appropriate tools — twitch fighters go for the rocket-carrying tanks, and campers are well-suited to the sneaky sniper class. The popularity of *TFC* ensures a lot of third-party maps.

IS IT WORTH IT?

Damn right, cheapskate! *TFC* is free, free, free! Just download it from the Internet, or snag it off the latest **PCXL** Disc. To say this bad boy kicks serious ass is an understatement (despite some problematic crash bugs).

The games are a blast to play — particularly Hunted, where you must assassinate an important-looking guy. Beware: It's all a fine marketing ploy to whet your appetite for *Team Fortress 2*, now delayed till October.

WHAT IT COSTS

Price: Free

RATING 8

BLOOD II: THE NIGHTMARE LEVELS

WHAT IS IT?

The Nightmare Levels are an add-on to the buggy, but still reasonably entertaining, *Blood II*. It's intended for the five people who bought the original game and just can't get enough of this first-person shooter. (Well, it might be more than five).

WHAT IT ADDS

Six new multiplayer levels, two new weapons, three new enemies, and a few lame single-player levels. It also adds a multiplayer mode where you can play soccer with the heads of zombies. Doesn't sound too exciting, does it? These are really pretty typical additions, and certainly nothing to write home about.

IS IT WORTH IT?

Only the disturbingly *Blood II*-obsessed should even consider this pack. The multiplayer levels are well designed, but who are you going to play against? The single-player levels include platform jumping elements and some ridiculously stupid enemy AI. The new weapons are lame, pushing old themes with little new verve, and the whole experience left a bad taste in my mouth. If you are one of the five previously mentioned freakish bloody people who actually bought into this game, knock yourself out. For the rest of us, the answer to this question is a resounding "no."

WHAT IT COSTS

Price: $19.99

RATING 3

With a title like "Bare Essentials" you'd think there would be babes somewhere, wouldn't you? PC ACCELERATOR July 1999 http://www.pcxl.com

IF SOMETHING BLOWS, WE WON'T LIE ABOUT IT.



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Imagine Games Network

Going to Extremes

Every once in a while we get a game that is just a little bit too easy to review. Last month we kicked the tar out of *Extreme Bulrider*, definitely one of the worst games ever seen by this magazine staff. Well, it seems that Activision (under the guise of Head Games) isn't finished by a long shot. The immediate follow-up to that title is the equally inane *Extreme Rodeo*. This game features all the stuff from the first title, plus a few other worthless events. So instead of a review, we've decided to analyze the game and see exactly why it is so extreme and assess how **PCXL** would make it even more extreme.



Event Three: Bull Poker

WHY IT'S EXTREME→ Controlling the bull, you try to run over rodeo clowns.
HOW WE'D MAKE IT MORE EXTREME→ The regular bull would be replaced by a goatee-wearing, 20-nothing bull who shouts a lot and can't hold a steady job. He also lives in his parent's garage where he practices using his laser beam eyes.



Event Six: Calf Roping

WHY IT'S EXTREME→ It represents the ultimate age-old struggle — man versus underage bovine.
HOW WE'D MAKE IT MORE EXTREME→ The calves would say "Dude" a lot.



Event one: Bull Riding

WHY IT'S EXTREME→ Your slow-moving bull could theoretically buck in a strange and "extreme" manner.
HOW WE'D MAKE IT MORE EXTREME→ Tie the same rope that is used to yank the bull's private bits onto the riders — let's see who hangs on now. Also, give the bulls laser beams for eyes.



Event Four: Saddle Bronc Riding

WHY IT'S EXTREME→ This is the skill-riding event of the rodeo — the "ballet of the barnyard."
HOW WE'D MAKE IT MORE EXTREME→ Replace the saddle bronc with Starr Jones, from "The View," in a leather saddle. She should also have laser beams shooting out of her eyes.



Event Two: Barrel Racing

WHY IT'S EXTREME→ Hot-looking blondes in tight red jeans usually attempt this event.
HOW WE'D MAKE IT MORE EXTREME→ Show why the event is so dangerous. It's so boring that people make a mad rush to buy beer, occasionally injuring bystanders. Also, give the horses laser beams for eyes.



Event Five: Bareback Bronc Riding

WHY IT'S EXTREME→ You ain't got no saddle.
HOW WE'D MAKE IT MORE EXTREME→ Same as above, but this time Starr Jones is naked and the laser beams are coming out of her [rest deleted for sake of *PC Games* readers who are now getting our magazine and may be offended].

THE STANDINGS

Baseball's in full swing these days, and *High Heat 2K* is still in the lead.

	GAME TITLE	W	L
BASKETBALL	NBA Live 99	2	0
	NBA Live 98	1	1
	NBA Action	0	2
FOOTBALL	NCAA 99	2	0
	GameDay 99	1	1
	Madden 99	0	2
GOLF	Links LS 99	4	0
	Tiger Woods 99	3	1
	Golden Tee Golf	2	2
	Pro 18 World Tour	1	3
	Fox Sports Golf 99	0	4
HOCKEY	NHL Hockey 99	2	0
	NHL Hockey 98	1	1
	Powerplay 98	0	2
BASEBALL	High Heat 2k	4	0
	Triple Play 2k	3	1
	Microsoft Baseball 2k	2	2
	Hardball 6: 2K Edition	1	3
	Baseball 2K Edition (VR)	0	4
SOCCER	FIFA 99	2	0
	Fox Sports Soccer 98	1	1
	Sensible Soccer 98	0	2

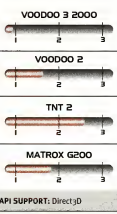
DEVELOPER –›	Wideberg
PUBLISHER –›	Microsoft
REQUIRED –›	P133, 32MB RAM, 150MB hard drive space, 4x CD-ROM
IDEAL –›	PII 300, 64MB RAM, 500MB hard drive space, gamepad

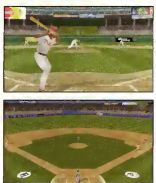
Microsoft Baseball 2000

"Better than last year" but still not good enough

ACCELE-RATED

Runs without 3D acceleration, but looks best on a high-end system. You can get good performance with a Voodoo 2 or TNT, but the TNT 2 is the best. Some major graphical glitches occured when we tried to play the game using a Voodoo 3, which dropped its score.



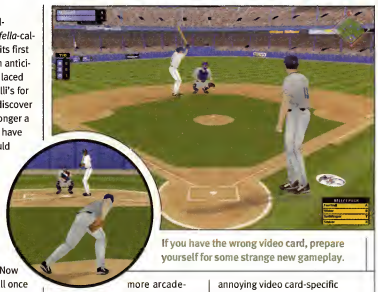


Hey, they're baseball pics. Don't expect anything funny.

Last year I gave Microsoft a well-deserved *Goodfella*-caliber kicking for its first baseball title. In anticipation of this year's entry I laced up my steel toed Bruno Malli's for another go-round, only to discover that the franchise was no longer a patsy to beat down. Who'd have thunk that the "Big M" would have listened to gamers when it made *Microsoft Baseball 2000* and address most of the problems that made its original baseball game such a disaster?

Just look at the improvements to see what I mean. Now you can actually see the ball once it is hit, and the camera doesn't switch right before your infielder tries to make a play. In fact, of the games we've seen, this default camera is one of the best designed and easiest to use in the latest crop of PC baseball games.

Another major improvement is the much easier to use menu interface. The developer wisely scrapped last year's attempt for a new look that is simpler, more detailed, and just plain prettier. The interface is laid out nicely, is well documented onscreen (something sports developers often forget), and is always just two clicks away. Another major improvement can be seen in gameplay. This year's version was supposed to be more arcade-oriented, but in contrast to the cartoon style of *Triple Play 2000*, this title offers fast gameplay that feels more like real baseball. From top to bottom, this is a much better game than last year's. The only problem is it's still a far cry from the best of the lot, *High Heat 2000*.



If you have the wrong video card, prepare yourself for some strange new gameplay.

The missing ingredients start in the batter's box. *MBB2K* utilizes an onscreen batting meter, much to its own detriment. The meter features a set of crosshairs that determines where you are swinging. For instance, if your crosshairs are below the ball at contact it will launch upwards. This adds a bit of realism in the action at the cost of realistic pitcher/batter duels. Even though the pitching icon (which sadly indicates where you are going to throw the ball) can be turned off, the batter's aid (which can't be removed) detracts from the key realism ingredient of the fabled pitcher/batter showdown.

More problems exist outside of the batter's box, such as the game's underwhelming sound effects, though still an improvement on last year's dreary effort. Other disappointing details including clumsy baserunning controls, lack of GM options (such as draft, career modes, and shortened seasons), and it's plagued by a host of annoying video card-specific graphics bugs.

At $20 a pop, *Microsoft Baseball 2000* will lure some unsuspecting folk, but if you want the best baseball game on the market, stick with *High Heat 2000*. It's worth the extra dough.



GRAPHICS

The stadiums are decent and player models are the best in PC baseball.

SOUND

Crowd sounds add to the overall feel, though the effects are lame.

CONTROL

The swing meter gives extra control at the expense of immersive experience.

REALISM

Though *MBB2K* was targeted for arcade sports fans, it still feels more like real baseball than most.

RATING



Pluses

- Nice looking player models
- It's only 20 bucks
- The gameplay is fast, but realistic

Minuses

- Numerous graphic bugs
- Horrible swing animations
- Boring pitcher/batter interface

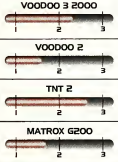
DEVELOPER → Interplay Sports
PUBLISHER → Interplay
REQUIRED → P200, 32MB RAM, 60MB hard drive space, 3D card with D3D or OpenGL support, 4x CD-ROM
IDEAL → PII 300, 64MB RAM, 600MB hard drive space

Baseball Edition 2000

Zombie butts drive me nuts!

ACCELE-RATED

Baseball Edition 2000 requires any standard 3D card, but the difference between a high-end solution (TNT2 or Voodoo3) and a low end (Voodoo or Riva 128) is very noticeable. The game looks better on the TNT, Matrox G200, and S3 than it does on the Voodoo's.



API SUPPORT: Direct3D, OpenGL

Actual e-mail transcript:

[Dan's e-mail note to Mike Salmon] Hey Mike, I just finished playing through *Baseball Edition 2000* and I wanted to know if I have to write a whole new review for it. It's basically the same as last year's, and I thought it would be easier to reprint my old review with a few minor adjustments.

[Reply from Mike] Heck, I don't care. Nobody reads sports anyway. Is it really that similar?

[Dan] Heeeey! Lots of people read the sports section, and yes, this game's pretty darn similar to the last one. Aside from some minor stadium texture work, added mocap, player remodeling, and a remodeled interface, you're basically looking at the same game we gave a 6 rating to last year.

[Mike] Well, do the improvements make the game look better?

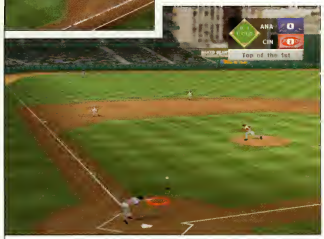
[Dan] No, that's the weird part. The stadium textures still look flat and their animation adds basically nothing to the look. The players have names on their backs now, but their faces and bodies are just as nondescript and strangely disturbing as before.

[Mike] Ooh, the return of the zombie ballplayers right?

[Dan] Yep, zombie ballplayers with finely-toned digital butts.







The infield grounder — just another one of those brain-numbingly boring things about baseball that fanatics like us love.



The fielding animations in *Baseball 2000* are absolutely amazing. Too bad the batting animations are three shades of ugly.

[Mike] Yeah, uh, that's great ... look, I gotta go do some editing.

[Dan] Did I mention the fielding motions were incredible?

[Mike] Yeah, you always go on about how they are the best of any PC baseball game. I take it the batting animations are just as good?

[Dan] Nope, (pfft sound) they are absolutely atrocious. It's so bad that it affects gameplay because you try to swing early to compensate for slow motion movement.

[Mike] How could that happen? I thought the game was based on the *Messiah* engine.

[Dan] I think the *Messiah* technology in its current state is a bad fit for a baseball game. It works for fielding and it creates some finely-toned zombie butts, but in the batter's box it looks and runs bad.

[Mike] Enough with the zombie butt talk. You're freakin' me out!

[Dan] Sorry, did I mention the series includes play-by-play for the first time?

[Mike] Good. How are the simulation options this time?

[Dan] Still not so good ... This game was made for arcade-style play, so the GM options are lacking. Hardcore simmers will want to pass.

[Mike] Well, what's the bottom line? And if you even mention zombie butts, I swear I'll fire you.

[Dan] *BE2000* has excellent defensive gameplay but is hamstrung by batting problems, lack of simulation depth, and an ill-fitted engine.

[Mike] You'd better write a new review, Dan. Don't do anything lazy to get out of writing a full review.

[Dan] OK. Just one question... what's the key combo for COPY?

GRAPHICS
Same as last year, the players look like zombie freaks (with nice bums).

SOUND
Play-by-play is nice, bat sounds are exciting, but overall audio is weak.

CONTROL
Fielding control is excellent, but batting control and animation stink.

REALISM
AI is better than last year, but this still doesn't feel like real baseball.

RATING 5

Pluses
- Fielding animations and control
- New play-by-play
- Home run derby is fun

Minuses
- Swing animations are awful
- Stadiums are still bland
- Lack of season mode and other GM options

HEAD TO HEAD

	GRAPHICS	SOUND	CONTROL	REALISM	FINAL
 **Triple Play 2000 vs. Microsoft Baseball 2000** Ah, megacorp vs. megacorp. It's a bloody battle for bragging rights between the two publishing behemoths	**EDGE:** *MICROSOFT BASEBALL 2000* The sharper textures and better player models sets *MBB2K* ahead of its competition	**CLEAR WINNER:** *TRIPLE PLAY 2000* The best play-by-play and game sounds in the business got even better this year	**EDGE:** *TRIPLE PLAY 2000* Tough call here, but the more intuitive batting in *TP 2000* was the deciding factor for us	**CLEAR WINNER:** *MICROSOFT BASEBALL 2000* Both are arcade oriented, but *MBB2K* feels more like real baseball	**WINNER** *TRIPLE PLAY 2000* A close call, but *Triple Play* (1-0) won out over *MBB2K* (0-1) because it was simply more fun
 **Baseball Edition 2000 vs. High Heat 2000** Right now it would be a safe bet to put your money on *High Heat 2000*	**CLEAR WINNER:** *HIGH HEAT 2000* No contest here. *High Heat*'s new polygonal graphics are far beyond the competition	**EDGE:** *BASEBALL EDITION 2000* Neither title is known for it's audio, but *BE2K* is a little better	**CLEAR WINNER:** *HIGH HEAT 2000* No question — just compare the two batting interfaces and you will see how good *High Heat* really is	**CLEAR WINNER:** *HIGH HEAT 2000* Not even close, *High Heat* outcasses *BE2K* in making computer baseball feel real	**WINNER** *HIGH HEAT 2000* In a walk through the park, *High Heat 2000* (1-0) slomps *Baseball Edition 2000* (0-1). I told you to put your money on *High Heat!*
 **Triple Play 2000 vs. Baseball Edition 2000** Interplay's second baseball title goes head-to-head against one of the oldest franchises on the market	**EDGE:** *TRIPLE PLAY 2000* *Triple Play 2000*'s higher production values, better stadiums, and more realistic environment are enough to beat *BE2K*	**CLEAR WINNER:** *TRIPLE PLAY 2000* The play-by-play in *BE2K* is solid, but it's impossible to top *TP 2000* here	**CLEAR WINNER:** *TRIPLE PLAY 2000* *Baseball Edition 2000*'s horrible batting control continues to kill the game in head-to-head competition	**EDGE:** *BASEBALL EDITION 2000* Since *Triple Play* was created to be an arcade action title, realism is not much of a concern	**WINNER** *TRIPLE PLAY 2000* In its second win, *Triple Play 2000* (2-0) tops Baseball Edition 2000 (0-2)
 **Baseball Edition 2000 vs. Microsoft Baseball 2000** Don't feel bad, we get these game names mixed up, too	**CLEAR WINNER:** *MICROSOFT BASEBALL 2000* With its crisp, hi-resolution graphics, *MBB2K* leaps beyond *BE2000*. No contest	**EDGE:** *MICROSOFT BASEBALL 2000* The dynamic crowds in *MBB2K* are the deciding factor in this category	**CLEAR WINNER:** *MICROSOFT BASEBALL 2000* *Baseball Edition 2000*'s horrible batting control rears its ugly head	**EDGE:** *MICROSOFT BASEBALL 2000* Even though it's an arcade style game, *MBB2K* feels more real	**WINNER** *MICROSOFT BASEBALL 2000* *Microsoft Baseball 2000* (1-1) seals the last place fate of *Baseball Edition 2000* (0-3)
 **High Heat 2000 vs. Triple Play 2000** The top two franchises of last year go at it again	**EDGE:** *HIGH HEAT 2000* The player models don't have the same high-poly numbers, but *High Heat*'s stadiums and overall package looks much better	**EDGE:** *TRIPLE PLAY 2000* EA owns this category right now — no one's even close	**CLEAR WINNER:** *HIGH HEAT 2000* *High Heat* has got the best pitcher/batter duels we've ever seen on a PC	**CLEAR WINNER:** *HIGH HEAT 2000* *Triple Play* is all about arcade action, while *High Heat* focuses on real baseball simulation. An easy call	**WINNER** *HIGH HEAT 2000* *High Heat* (2-0) pushes for a sweep with an easy victory over *Triple Play 2000* (2-1). Two down, one to go
 **High Heat 2000 vs. Microsoft Baseball 2000** The final showdown pits two titles that were on the opposite end of the quality spectrum last year, but are much closer this year	**EDGE:** *MICROSOFT BASEBALL 2000* Even though *High Heat* has better looking stadiums, *Microsoft Baseball* just looks much better overall	**CLEAR WINNER:** *HIGH HEAT 2000* Again *MBB2K*'s horrible bat sounds prove to be its undoing	**CLEAR WINNER:** *HIGH HEAT 2000* No game can compare to the control and feel of *High Heat*	**EDGE:** *HIGH HEAT 2000* *High Heat* is the purest of all the baseball games this year, but at the same time it's also the most fun	**WINNER** *HIGH HEAT 2000* *High Heat* (3-0) tops *Microsoft Baseball 2000* (2-2) and is crowned the king of PC baseball gaming

FRAT FRAG FEST

SIXTEEN TEAMS REMAIN, BUT ONLY ONE CAN WIN

Welcome once again to Online Arena, a place online gamers can call home. Each month we have special features, stories, updates, and any other crazy shit we can think of on all the games you are (or should be) playing online. This section continues to evolve and we'd love to hear some comments and suggestions on what you want. Just send them to letters@pcxl.com.

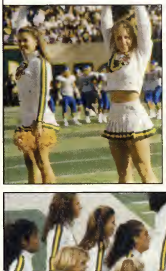
Last we heard from HEAT CIGL, the race for the cup was just beginning, but as of press time it was to round 4 and of the 128 competing teams only 16 remained. Over 400 colleges have participants among the teams and HEAT CIGL continues to grow. Some of the more prestigious colleges in the tournament include MIT, Columbia, Colgate, Princeton, Stanford, Texas A&M, Boston College, Duke, and Michigan State. However, unlike college basketball, the big boys don't always win.

The favorites in the four brackets are no locks to win, but if we were gambling types, this is where our money would go. (Actually we are betting guys, where the hell is our bookie?)

Bracket 1 — Carnegie Mellon University 2 is one of the heavy favorites, despite their college's silly name.

Bracket 2 — Princeton University looks to be ready, but in talking with the team, they don't consider themselves a favorite.

Bracket 3 — Too open to call, every game has been close and nobody has any real advantage.





"How does that *Command and Conquer* cheer go again? Hell, let's just show them our butts instead, okay?"



"Gimme a G-E-E-K! Yeah!"

Bracket 4 — University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign is generally considered the best HEAT CIGL team in North America, even though they can't decide what city their university is from.

The prizes in the HEAT CIGL tournament add up to $10,000 (almost enough for a semester's worth of books at some of these same universities), and include pizza, CDs, a ninja gaming machine, and more. However these students aren't in it for the money — they want the HEAT CIGL Championship Cup, which has the winning school's name engraved on the side, and goes to the winners' campus until someone wins it back in another tournament.

Check the latest updates at www.heatcigl.com and get involved in the next tournament. Maybe your school can win the championship and you can land in the first round of the PGL draft (if there were such a thing).

PLAYER PROFILES

What does it take to be a college gaming stud? We pry into the lives of a few college athletes to see what makes them click.

NAME—> Mike Klarman
UNIVERSITY—> Carnegie Mellon University
MAJOR—> Information Systems
FAVORITE PRE-GAME SNACK—> Anything microwaveable
FAVORITE DRINK—> A soft drink. I'm not quite 21 (he means beer)
WEAPON OF CHOICE—> Whatever I have ammo for I'll use

ABSOLUTE COOLEST KILL?
The only cool kills I've had are the repeated killings of my teammate

WHAT IS THE KEY TO THE TWO-MAN FORMAT?
The key is good communication. The skills among the top teams are all so close. The teams made up of roommates have a clear advantage here.

DOES PLAYING ON THE GAMING TEAM HELP WITH GETTING CHICKS?
I can't say I've used it as a pickup line yet. Maybe I'll try it

NAME—> Matt Childerston
UNIVERSITY—> Princeton University
MAJOR—> Electrical Engineering
FAVORITE PRE-GAME SNACK—> Ramen noodle soup (and it's cheap!)
FAVORITE DRINK—> Any "soda"
WEAPON OF CHOICE—> Rocket Launcher

HAS PARTAKING IN HEATCIGL CUT INTO STUDY TIME? BEER TIME? BABE TIME?
CIGL itself doesn't really cut into study time, but gaming in general takes up a chunk of my time. However, I can say that CIGL takes up 100% of my "babe time," since I have none (babes, that is) to speak of.

WHAT IS THE KEY TO THE TWO-MAN FORMAT?
Good communication. Once you get to this level where everyone's skill is comparable, then it's teamwork

ABSOLUTE COOLEST KILL SO FAR IN THE COMPETITION?
A guy got away from me up the main elevator (an Edge), so I said, "enemy at grenade launcher" to my teammate, Pete. I backed up and looked up to see which way he would go, and I saw Pete's Railgun shoot across my screen, followed by a death message

DOES PLAYING ON THE SCHOOL GAMING TEAM HELP AT ALL WITH GETTING CHICKS?
Yes. I've gotten at least ten times the number of chicks that I was getting before I started CIGL (See above comment about "babe time")

EVERQUEST

NOOKS AND CRANNIES, HILLS AND VALLEYS—ALL EXPLORED IN DETAIL

Everquest — it's better known as "Eversmack" around these parts because of its addictive qualities. Well, we had to put all those hours logged in the world of Norrath to some useful purpose, and here it is. Compiled here are a few travelogues that plot a couple of character routes to success. This should give you a few ideas on how to deal with the monsters, quests, and socialization. The game's producer, Brad McQuaid, supplied one of them, so that should provide some useful pointers! Your life in *Everquest* just got a whole lot clearer.

CASSIUS
12TH BARBARIAN SHAMAN

A suggestion for new shaman (or any newbie): When in doubt, run to the guards.

At first level, I cast Inner Fire on myself and clubbed the monsters to death.

At level 9, I got light healing and Spirit of the Wolf, possibly the most useful spell in the game, allowing those imbued with its powers to run much more quickly. Basically, this gives you a chance to run from a monster and therefore venture further into the more difficult zones.



By level 10 I was in the gnoll heartland of Blackburrow. Lower level characters usually hang out near the entrance area, picking off 5th and 6th level scrawny gnolls. Level 12 to 16 players usually go deeper in and group to wage war with one of the three gnoll commanders to try and snag their few magic items (spiked or studded collars mainly).

It's easy to get cocky — but gnolls group, so when soloing always be careful of more joining the attack. At the first sign of danger, run for the zone boundary. Learning this the hard way, I quickly grouped up with my guildmates of CLASH (my guild). A typical fight with an elite gnoll saw our warrior pounding on him while I healed him with my newly-acquired spells.

After a few deaths at the hands of "gnoll trains," I promised that I would stick to attacking giant snakes. They have giant snake fangs and venom sacs, which sold for about five gold and don't group. After about 50 giant snakes, I hit level 12 but got bored with the area and disliked the crowds of people.

A guild-mate, Sanjuro, a level 23 mage, cast invisibility on me and we ran for about 30 minutes to West Karanas. He left me there as I stood to survey the lands. Lions and giant beetles were plentiful, but tended to attack in packs. After many days in this zone I was bored again and moved to Splitpaw — a similar area to Blackburrow but much less congested. After fighting many gnolls, and before I could run back to the zone line, I died. All belongings on my corpse were now many zones away. Fortunately, being a guild member means having help, and friends escorted me back to retrieve my corpse and continue further into the dungeon.

FITZOR OWNZAL
31ST HALFLING DRUID

Upon reaching 20th, the world really opens up to a group of players. For my group, which consists of a wizard, two druids, a warrior, and a ranger, we hunted in the Oasis of Marr, Upper Guk, Lost Temple of Cazic Thule, and finally South Karana.



In the Oasis we hunted deepwater crocodiles and Lockjaw, a level 25 crocodile. After level 20, a balanced group can take him down quite easily.

From the Oasis we went to Upper Guk in Innothule Swamp, home of the trolls. We battled our way into Upper Guk, slaying frogloks of varying class and difficulty. A few of the items we got from Guk included a Runed Bone Fork, Collar of Undead Protection, and Chitin Shell Shield.

Since we were so close to the Lost Temple of Cazic Thule, we decided to stop by and see what was going on and how we would do there. Cazic is in the Feerrott, home of the ogres and lizardmen, and one of the coolest places in the game. We went in around 23rd level and are still there at 31. There are certain things that con "tombstone." I've heard rumors of an avatar that is around 42 with a very nice item.



Everything was going great until the sand giants showed up.



Give me a big hug ... ahhh ... crocodile hug ... come to Lockjaw ...

There's plenty to see and kill in South Karanas, from elephants to cyclops. There are also centaurs of varying levels (16 to 31) and aviaks (16 to 31). We hunt down the cyclops, AviakAvocet, and Centaur Charger (the hardest of the aviaks and centaurs). There are also many rare and frightening monsters in South Karana. We killed the pegasus Quillmane for a nice rare item, and he conned white at level 30.

BRAD MCQUAID
11TH HALF-ELVEN RANGER

The following is my personal experiences playing *Everquest* after release. My playstyle is mixed, as I enjoy power gaming, roleplaying, and socializing. I really like to trade, sell, and buy items, especially trying to obtain items someone at my level typically wouldn't have. I'm neither timid nor daring, but I definitely don't live at zone borders like many players, and prefer to be in the depths of dungeons involved in difficult but winnable combat.

I was eager to see how far newbies could traverse Norrath if careful. A ranger friend and I made our way into the Karanas at about level 5 or so, and met up with some friendly higher level players, including a shaman. She cast Spirit of the Wolf on both of us and then led us through the gorge leading to the Misty Thicket. With all sorts of nasty NPCs on our tail (including minotaurs, muddites, and even an evil eye), we barely made it through — the danger was quite invigorating.

We kept going with our shaman leader and her party, and eventually made it all the way to Freeport with no deaths. There we met up with a dwarven cleric and sailed from Butcherblock to Freeport, got bound, and adventured in North Ro and the East Commonlands. We dodged griffins, hunted bears and wolves, and had a great time. After spending a couple of days in the Commonlands I was killed by a griffin once — paying attention and using some of the third person camera views proved to be essential at this point.



It gives you the finger.



It's actually a miniature griffin that is really close to the camera.

In order to train I had to make a choice — return to Surefall Glade or head to Kelethin (there's no ranger guild near Freeport). I determined that taking the ship was less risky than another trek through the gorge. First, though, I headed to North Ro and bought some Cutthroat Rings pretty cheaply (it's always best to buy items close to where they spawn). I landed in the Butcherblock Mountains, asked some friendly dwarves the way to Greater Faydark, was told which paths to follow, and resumed my journey.

I was very careful to avoid combat since I wasn't bound and eventually found my way to Kelethin after receiving additional help from a friendly elf. I did my training and then heard someone auctioning Minotaur Axes for five platinum or so. Aha! Another chance to test the player-driven economy! So I offered this person both Cutthroat Rings for an axe and he agreed, as the rings were rare in that area at the time. Moonlighting as a merchant taking goods from continent to continent worked, I found myself a very effective weapon at level 7 for only about 10 gold of cost on my part — pretty cheap.

I then got bound to Kelethin and began to do battle near Crushbone, where I found it to be a little crowded, but not in a bad way. It was chaos, and it was fun. I even ventured into the dungeon of Crushbone itself for a short time, but was chased out and decided to call it a night.

My friends, still in Freeport, convinced me to return to Antonica the next day and I sailed back. We then decided to brave the Commonlands and adventure in the Misty Thicket, where we heard there was quite a bit to do. We all made a few levels there, had a great time (even fooled around in the RunnyEye dungeon a bit, dying often), but then decided to return to the Qeynos area to obtain some items from the Blackburrow dungeon.

Finding another shaman took a little time, but eventually we were all enchanted with Spirit of the Wolf once again and raced through the gorge (this time with no guide). We all made it, except for my dwarven cleric friend, who, sitting in East Karana, decided that his corpse was not retrievable. He ran through again, naked this time, and actually made it. We all committed to pooling our resources and re-equipping him as soon as possible.

After that, it was many days in Blackburrow, which is a great dungeon, even though lots of people adventure there. At level 9 or so, we traveled to the dungeon of Paw. It was a lot of fun to learn another dungeon, and it was also a different experience, because it was far less populated than Blackburrow. We were more careful there, not wanting long distance corpse retrievals (although we got to do some of those anyway).

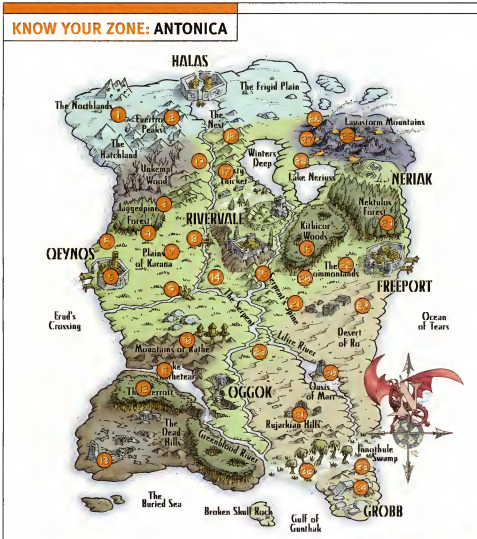
We are currently at level 11, and frequent Blackburrow and Paw, but spend quite a bit of time hunting in West Karana in search of bandits, who spawn valuable treasure. One of my goals is to head back to Freeport and then south to the swamps to explore Guk, to meet with higher level adventurers near the Temple of Cazic Thule and obtain powerful weapons and armor at (hopefully) low prices.

We are having an incredible time and I find myself playing *Everquest* late into the night, returning to work tired and with bloodshot eyes, only to find a good portion of my team in the same situation. There are people on the dev team with characters in their 20s, and even one who recently made level 40 (yeah, he plays a LOT). Creating *Everquest* has truly been a labor of love.



She'd be hot if she didn't have wings ... and claws ... and no hair.

KNOW YOUR ZONE: ANTONICA



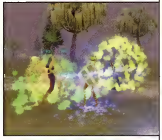
It's a wide, wild world out there with so much to see and do. But in the spirit of adventure, and to whet the appetite for long distance treks, we've compiled a list of the fundamentals of each zone area. We didn't include the main cities that usually have rats, bats, and snakes outside for the newbies. Special thanks are in order for Dicchem, Bopper and Steelflight.

21. BEFALLEN

MONSTERS--> Greater skeletons, ghouls, lesser mummies, zombies, shadowknights, plague rats
ITEMS--> Barbed Armor (magical bonuses), Damask Armor (light, casters and monks), Antiqued Silver Ring (+2 ac), Bone Chipped Rod (locates corpses), Bone Bladed Claymore (2hs magic 17 dam 45 del –8 agi), Thaumaturgist's Robe (5 ac +3 agi)
LEVEL--> 12 to 30

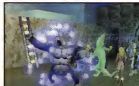
19. BEHOLDER'S MAZE

MONSTERS--> Giant snakes, muddites, minotaurs, evil eyes
ITEMS--> Giant snake fangs (pierce, 5 dam 27 delay), Minotaur Axes (B dam 37 del)
LEVEL--> 10 to 20



3. BLACKBURROW

MONSTERS--> Gnolls – scrawny, patrolling, elite, commander, shaman
ITEMS--> Onyx Earrings (+2 AG, 1 AC), Spiked Collar (AC3, +3 STR), fangs, Spiked Shoulderpads (Str +5, AC 4), Studded Collar (Ac1, Str +1 Sta +1)
LEVEL--> 7 to 18



13. CAZIC THULE

MONSTERS--> Lizardmen, clay golems, gorillas
ITEMS--> Demon Claw (1hs, 5 dam 19 del), fine steel weapons
LEVEL--> 14 to 36

22. EAST COMMONLANDS

MONSTERS--> Bears, kodiaks, orcs, zombies, air elementals, lions, griffons
ITEMS--> Pelts, hides, weapons
LEVEL--> 6 to 20

14. EAST KARANA

MONSTERS--> Treants, NPCs
ITEMS--> Never dared even look wrong at a treant
LEVEL--> 1 to 50

2. EVERFROST PEAKS

Monsters--> Gnoll pups, ice goblin whelps, woolly mammoths, snow orc troopers and mountaineers, snow leopards, giant woolly spiders
ITEMS--> Lupine armor (magical leather) and polar bear armor (from Karg Icebear), Gigantic Zwelhander (2hs 1B dam 39 del), Cloak of the Icebear (ac B +10 hp +20 cold resist), bear hides
LEVEL--> 1 to 30

12. FEERROTT

MONSTERS--> Decaying skeletons, minor scarabs, lizardmen
ITEMS--> Steel weapons
LEVEL--> 1 to 20



15. HIGHHOLD PASS

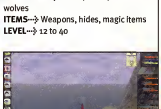
MONSTERS--> Bandits, gnolls, orcs
ITEMS--> Polished Granite Tomahawk (1hs magic, 6 dam 26 del, casts Berserker Strength), Shiny Brass Halberd (magic, dam 16 del 4B), Darkwood shield (12 ac +9 str)
LEVEL--> 15 to 30

32. INNOTHULE SWAMP

MONSTERS--> Frogloks
ITEMS--> Woven and netted items
LEVEL--> 8 to 20

16. KITHICOR FOREST

MONSTERS--> Gnolls, bears, werewolves
ITEMS--> Weapons, hides, magic items
LEVEL--> 12 to 40



11. LAKE RATH

MONSTERS--> Orcs, bandits, aviaks, sharks
ITEMS--> Bronze weapons
LEVEL--> 16 to 30

25. LAVASTORM

MONSTERS--> Fire snakes, fire drakes,



The Oasis of Marr is filled with really big oil barons.

fire elementals, volcanic rock
ITEMS--> Gems
LEVEL--> 14 to 30

34. LOWER GUK
MONSTERS--> High level frogloks, vampire bats, black widow spiders, minotaurs
ITEMS--> Adamantine Shoulders (12 ac, +7 wis), Black Embroidered Sleeves (4 ac, +10 hp, +25 mana), Robe of the Oracle (+1 int +1 wis +30 mana)
LEVEL--> 35 to 50

17. MISTY THICKET
MONSTERS--> Fire beetle, goblins, spiders, orcs, bixies
ITEMS--> Eyes, weapons
LEVEL--> 1 to 16

10. MOUNTAINS OF RATHE
Monsters--> Basilisks, zombies, cyclops, griffons, hill giants
ITEMS--> Feathers, skins
LEVEL--> 16 to 40

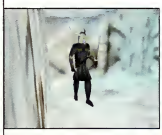
26. NAJENA
MONSTERS--> Tentacle terrors, elementals, greater skeletons, ogres
ITEMS--> Flesh Rings (+2 STR), Damask Armor, Gossamer Armor (light armor for casters), Clawed Knuckle Ring (+20 hp), Black Tome of Silver Runes (+4 int +30 mana), Ashenwood Short Spear (6 dam 22 del casts haste 1/day), Barbed Whip (magic 1hs, 7 dam 28 del), Ogre War Maul (2hb 17 dam 50 del), Flesh Band (+2 str), Flowing Black Robe (8 ac +3 int +5 sta), Journeyman Boots (increase speed), Leering Mask (3 ac +3 dex)
LEVEL--> 18 to 40

24. NEKTULOS FOREST
MONSTERS--> Young kodiaks, zombies, stone guardians
ITEMS--> Guards carry bronze weapons
LEVEL--> 1 to 30

8. NORTH KARANA
MONSTERS--> Griffawns, griffons, giant beetles, bears, wolves
ITEMS--> Hides, combine weapons at gypsy camp
LEVEL--> 12 to 40

29. NORTH RO
MONSTERS--> Pumas, giant spiders, sand giants
ITEMS--> Pelts, Cutthroat Rings
LEVEL--> 8 to 30

30. OASIS OF MARR
MONSTERS--> Zombies, mummies, crocodiles, orcs, sand giants
ITEMS--> Glowing Wooden Crook (2hb magic 11 dam 35 del), Fine Woven Turban (10 ac +10 fire resist), Gator Skin Leggings (7 ac +4 wis +15 hp), Gator Skin Tunic (12 ac +5 sta), Scute Shield (15 ac +9 sta), Rawhide Armor
LEVEL--> 14 to 40



1. PERMAFROST
MONSTERS--> Ice giants, ice goblins, timber wolves
ITEMS--> Silvery Two Handed Axe (17 dam 48 del), Symbol of Loyalty to Vox (bracer, 7 ac +7 cold resist)
LEVEL--> 18 to 50

5. OEYNOS HILLS
MONSTERS--> Gray wolves, gnoll scouts, fire beetles, bears, skeletons
ITEMS--> Bear Hide Armor (from Chanda Milier), Cracked Staffs (from gnoll scouts)
LEVEL--> 1 to 7

6. OEYNOS AQUADUCTS
MONSTERS--> Giant rats, large snakes, skeletons, smugglers, frogloks
ITEMS--> Alligator Tooth Earring (+5 hp), Limestone Ring (+5 hp)
LEVEL--> 5 to 15

18. RUNNYEYE CITADEL
MONSTERS--> Goblins, evil eyes, goblin king
ITEMS--> Blackened Iron Armor (basically chainmail), Black Iron Crown (5 ac, +5 str, +5 all resist), Black Iron Girdle (5 ac +5 sta), Black Iron Medallion (+3 int +3 wis), Blackened Iron Sword (2hs 16 dam 46 del), Grotesque Mask (4 ac +5 dex –7 cha),
LEVEL--> 6 to 40



9. SOUTH KARANA
MONSTERS--> Lions, cyclops, centaurs, elephants
ITEMS--> Opal Scythe (2hs 11 dam 45 del casts disease cloud), Beartooth Necklace (+3 sta +10 hp), Mroon's Toy (2hb 20 dam 70 del), Electrum Bracelet (4 ac +3 agi +3 dex), Feathered Leggings (4 ac +7 sta), cat pelts
LEVEL--> 10 to 30

27. SOLUSEK'S EYE A
MONSTERS--> Fire goblins
ITEMS--> Too dangerous to find out
LEVEL--> 28 to 36

28. NAGAFEN'S LAYER
MONSTERS--> Maybe a red dragon
ITEMS--> Beyond your wildest dreams
LEVEL--> 40 plus



31. SOUTH RO
MONSTERS--> Orcs, sand giants, dry boned skeletons
ITEMS--> Weapons, bone chips
LEVEL--> 12 to 30

23. SPLITPAW
MONSTERS--> Gnolls of many varieties
ITEMS--> Snakeskin Armor (stronger than leather, magical bonuses), Runed Totem Staff (2hb, 9 dam 37 del +5 hp +5 mana), Cryskrife (pierce, 4 dam 21 delay)
LEVEL--> 10 to 30

4. SUREFALL GLADES
MONSTERS--> Bears
ITEMS--> Hides
LEVEL--> 1 to 15

33. UPPER GUK
MONSTERS--> Frogloks, crocodiles
ITEMS--> Mesh and Netted Armor (magical, gloves allow monks to hit magic creatures), Troll Hide Belt (5 ac +5 str +5 dex), Silvered Platemail (magical, can be worn by more classes), Woven Armor (good for casters), Bracelet of Woven Grass (+3 int, +12 hp), Runed Bone Fork (pierce, 5 dam 29 del +10 heat cold magic resist), Collar of Undead protection (5 ac +7 disease and poison resist), Elf Hide Gloves (4 ac +5 dex +5 agi), Reed Rings (+2 dex +10 hp), Shimmering Orb (caster shield, 15 ac +20 hp)
LEVEL--> 8 to 30

20. WEST COMMONLANDS
MONSTERS--> Giant snakes, cutthroats, griffons
ITEMS--> Cutthroat Insignia Rings (1 ac +2 dex), Giant snake fangs
LEVEL--> 12 to 30

7. WEST KARANA
MONSTERS--> Lions, giant spiders, treants, hill giants, bandits, ogres, scarecrows
ITEMS--> Cat pelts, bronze weapons, Bone Armor (magical, all can wear)
LEVEL--> 8 to 40

Cyclops range from level 20 to 30 and carry 1 – 5 platinum pieces

KNOW YOUR ZONE: AK'ANON



35. BUTCHERBLOCK MNTNS

MONSTERS—› Skeletons, goblins, emerald drakes, undead chess pieces
ITEMS—› Bone chips
LEVEL—› 1 to 15

42. CRUSHBONE

MONSTERS—› Orc pawns, centurions, legionnaires, slavers, emissaries, high level NPCs
ITEMS—› Shiny Brass Shield (AC10, +10 SV magic, greater lightstone light), Bracers of Battle (3 ac +1 str +3 dex), Screaming Mace (magic B dam 35 del casts Yaulp), Dwarf Ring Tunic (AC12, +8 SV fire, cold, magic), Ornate Dagger (3 dam 20 delay), 1h Dwarven Axe (6 dam 22 del), 2h Dwarven Axe (14 dam 43 del)
LEVEL—› 7 to 20

36. DAGNOR'S CAULDRON

MONSTERS—› Giant snakes, aqua goblins
ITEMS—› Bronze weapons
LEVEL—› B to 16

37. ESTATE OF UNREST

MONSTERS—› Carrion ghouls, Jack o lanterns, tentacle terrors, mummies, werebats, hags
ITEMS—› Bloodstained Armor (magical bonuses), Pugius Dagger (5 dam 21 del), Tentacle Whip (1hs magic, 4 dam 25 delay, casts lifetap), Ivory Bracelet (+3 agi +20 mana), Opaline Earring (+5 cha), Savant's Cap (+3 int +3 wis), Ring Mail, Bronze Platemail, Fine steel weapons
LEVEL—› 1B to 40

41. GREATER FAYDARK

MONSTERS—› Orc pawns, centurions, black wolves, black widow hatchlings
ITEMS—› Weapons, hides
LEVEL—› 1 to B

38. KEDY DUNGEON

MONSTERS—› Lancer swordfish
ITEMS—› Powerful magic items
LEVEL—› 35 to 60

39. LESSER FAYDARK

MONSTERS—› Giant spiders, giant wasps, bandits, brownies, unicorns
ITEMS—› Crookstinger (pierce, 4 dam 21 delay, weak poison), Lark Twitter Bow (14 dam 100 range), Bronze weapons
LEVEL—› B to 40



40. MISTMOORE DUNGEON

MONSTERS—› Werewolves, vampires, specters, skeletons, zombies, gargoyles
ITEMS—› Bloodstone Eyepatch (4ac, +3 agi, +3 wis), Werewolf Pelts
LEVEL—› 22 to 50

43. STEAMFRONT MOUNTAINS

MONSTERS—› Kobolds, minotaurs, earth elementals
ITEMS—› Minotaur Axe, precious gems
LEVEL—› 12 to 30



E.Q. LEGENDS

Here are a few tales of the wondrous, weird, and even dirty tricks that have been used in the land of Norrath. As with all legends, we didn't actually see these take place, but a friend of a friend told us — really!

KERRA ISLE OVERTHROWN

A group of 70 players got together and rampaged through the island and town, massacring everything on their way to a final showdown with the Cat Priestess, who slaughtered 15 of them herself. Of the 70 attackers, 30 of them were slain.

REVENGE BY TRAIN

If there is a character in the land of *EQ* who you really don't like, or if you are just mean, then we've got a trick for you. If you have the invisibility spell, run around some nasty parts, gathering up a train of dangerous creatures. Now run to someone you really don't like and cast invisibility on yourself. The train will now devour the poor helpless soul. It's really mean, but creative.

DELAYED DUELS

Piss off a character until he challenges you to a duel. But don't accept the duel. Instead, follow him around until he is in the middle of a big battle and low on health. Now press "accept," strike him down, and take all his worldly possessions. It's mean, but he did challenge you to a duel, right?

SHIT! NOW WHAT?

The bizarre world of *Everquest* occasionally experiences minor quakes, freezes, and system farts. When such acts of God (or gods) take place, the unthinkable happens and the connection is broken. "The server is not responding." Among all those clouds floating across our EQ sky, every now and then a gray one shows up and if you examine it long enough, you are bound to find a few silver pieces worth of lining. Take these downtimes and use them to your advantage. Here is a list of things you might not have thought about doing when you can't get back to those green rolling hills and walking trees:

1. Eat (*real* food, maybe even something healthy)
2. Change the oil in your car (in case you have to leave your house)
3. Sleep (before 4:00 AM)
4. Clean up your geekosphere (the area surrounding your computer)
5. Bathe
6. Call your mom (you know she misses you)
7. Go for a walk (outside and *offline*)
8. Change your clothes (it's kind of like upgrading your armor to a less smelly armor class)
9. Feed your cat (that furry thing that runs at you and somewhat resembles a mangy rat)
10. See the light of day

HOW TO PLAY BLACKBURROW

MONSTERS --> *(toughest to weakest)* Tranixx Darkpaw, giant plague rat, gnoll commanders, elite gnoll guards, gnoll shamen, gnoll guardsmen, burly gnolls, giant snakes, patrolling gnolls, gnolls, razorgills, scrawny gnolls

OVERVIEW --> Blackburrow has a lot of things going for it. Progressive layout (it gets tougher the deeper you go in), a good distribution of monsters, good low/mid-level experience, good loot, near to Qeynos and Halas. Danger lurks in the trains (when one gnoll is attacked others join in, and soon the fleeing victim is trailing behind anything up to 30 creatures — usually leaving dead bodies in the scurry to the zone point). Since it's technically an outdoor zone, druids, shamans and rangers will do great.



You should think about coming in here around level 5-6, depending on your class and equipment. There are several scrawnies and regular gnolls on the surface, which you can take a crack at. Don't forget the small rooms as well as the one gnoll on the high ledge overlooking the water. Be wary of trapdoors in the huts, one of which will drop you into an elite gnoll guard room. The long ramp down takes you to the main "rest area" of the zone, which is a good place to hang around, get help and hunt the random gnolls nearby.



By level 9 most of the zone will be open for hunting, although the threat of guardsmen and trains will be ever present. Lone guardsmen and giant snakes will be your main targets. There are three different giant snake areas, the first being at the bottom of the ramp overlooking the water, where four appear. The next is the snake pit (with the spikes), where there are two more. Three more hang out at the top of a ramp leading to the deeper part of Blackburrow.



At levels 12 and higher you can basically hunt whatever and wherever you want. There are three gnoll commander rooms and one ledge where it's possible for a group of two or three level 11-12s to control. There's also the two elite gnoll ledge across the first wooden bridge underground. The "five spawn" room opposite the snake pit is the best of 'em all because you can surround the gnolls as soon as they pop in.

EQUIPMENT -->
Rusty Spiked Shoulderpads (3ac, +5 str, -10 resist magic) --> Found on gnoll commanders
Onyx Earrings (+2 agi) --> Found on gnoll commanders
Spiked Collar (3 ac +3 str) --> Found on elite gnolls
Studded Leather Collar (3 ac +1 str +1 sta) --> Found on elite gnolls
Giant snake fangs (shs 5 dam 29 delay) --> Found on uh, giant snakes
Gnoll fangs --> Found on all gnolls — cash in at Qeynos warrior guild for moonstones ($$)

WHAT TO EXPECT --> You'll be making good xp and loot here but the key is to keep your groups somewhat small, since it is a smaller dungeon and the hallways get a bit cramped. Shamans with SoW are great group members, as are rangers with snare. Gnolls run when damaged, and you can start trains by not finishing them before they get through a one-way door. Always be alert to where the nearest tough assisting gnoll is, especially when soloing, 'cause all it takes is one extra critter for things to get out of hand. Jumping into the water can save your skin if you're being trained, but many times you'll get followed.

KNOW YOUR ZONE: ERUDIN



44. TOXXULIA FOREST
MONSTERS--> Kobolds, skunks, decaying skeletons, bats, rats
ITEMS--> Weapons, skins
LEVEL--> 1 to 6

45. KERRA RIDGE
MONSTERS--> Kerrans, claw knights, pridesmen
ITEMS--> Rose quartz
LEVEL--> 15 to 40

46. ERUD'S CROSSING
MONSTERS--> Cats, necromancers
ITEMS--> Skins, weapons
LEVEL--> 10 to 25



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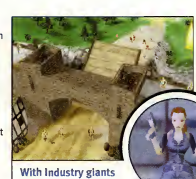
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Prepare for the sequel

Just when you thought it was safe to be an independent publisher ...

First it was GT Interactive embarking on a massive acquisition campaign that saw them ink deals with Cavedog (*Total Annihilation*) and Legend Entertainment (*Wheel of Time*). But as the disheveled company lurches to the West Coast under new president Thomas Heymann (formerly of The Disney Store, and succeeding Ron Chaimowitz), new players are taking up the challenge of buying up smaller independent publishers to form multinational conglomerates.

Now that veteran turn-based wargame publisher Talonsoft finds itself the subject of a buyout (getting snaffled into the burgeoning Take 2 Interactive family, which includes Mission Studios, creators of the *Jetfighter* flight sim franchise), it seems that nobody is safe. It's long been established that massive publishers will take over the industry, with a handful of dominant players calling all the shots (something akin to the current movie studio situation). So when a company like San Jose-based Accolade gets swallowed by French giant Infogrames, the writing seems to be on the wall for the independent publisher.



With Industry giants like Eidos, EA, and Infogrames buying up everyone else, is there any hope for the future of original games?

A recent spate of buyouts has given the games market a definite multinational flavor. Infogrames' purchase of Accolade adds to their acquisition of UK-based developer Gremlin (which itself incorporates DMA Design). Eidos has added Crystal Dynamics to its ever-expanding company portfolio, and the Electronic Arts juggernaut continues with the purchase of *C&C* creators Westwood Studios, in addition to its swallowing of Maxis a while ago.

So that leaves, umm ...? Exactly. The number of independent publishers grows smaller each week. Bungie, Monolith, and the omniscient GOD are a few of those left standing. What does that mean for gamers? Limited choices. And for game developers, limited original options. Think about the movie industry — it's rife with tales of small independent filmmakers bucking the odds to get their project completed and then seen only by family, friends, and close associates. All the while, the major studios churn out their next Meg Ryan romantic comedy, rake in $100 million, and start on the next one.

For the PC games market, the danger is the same. Franchises and sequels already dominate, though it's still just possible for original titles to make it to store shelves. How long are developers like Bungie going to be able to produce a critically acclaimed, yet disappointing seller, like *Myth?* Same for Monolith's *Shogo*? Probably not long, as a cap is placed on originality in order to satiate the ominous specter of the bottom line. And if Bungie or Monolith scores a big hit with one of their original titles, you can bet there'll be a sequel.

In the next couple of years, while the number of PCs expands and sales numbers increase, the amount of originality could get sucked away as the conglomerates fund *Tomb Raider 8* and *C&C 6*, while throwing peanuts at opportunities for new ideas.

Every weekday on our website we frag whatever the heck makes us angry, and occasionally we frag something just because. It needs it. Find out what we fragged today on www.pcxl.com. You'll com: for the frags, but you'll stay for the CRAZY NEWS AND BABES.

THE POWER METER

Movers move, shakers shake, and the wheels of the industry turn ever on. This is the latest ladder of greatness, as determined by PCXL.

THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH	
1	3	**HASBRO**--› *MW3*, *Civ 2: Gold*, and *Rollercoaster Tycoon* finally pitch Hasbro to the top, and make us forget all that Tonka nonsense.
2	2	**ELECTRONIC ARTS**--› Their development houses score big with Maxis' *SC3K*, Bullfrog bringing *Dungeon Keeper 2*, and Origin's *UO* still coining it in.
3	7	**ID**--› While *Doom* tragically remains in the media spotlight, the *Quake Arena* engine is already scoring big licensing deals with EA (Bond game) and Activision (*Star Trek: Voyager*).
4	-	**INFOGRAMES**--› Another French company begins a massive U.S. domination plan with the purchase of Accolade, Gremlin, and Beam, while putting out their own decent products.
5	-	**3DFX**--› The jury is still out on the second generation 3D wars, but 3Dfx is out of the gates first. (Nice of them to mention us in their million-dollar TV ad campaign.)
6	9	**VERANT INTERACTIVE**--› Despite *EverQuest* dropping out of the sales top ten, sufficient numbers have led to more servers, and increased levels of geekiness at PCXL.
7	-	**SIERRA**--› We're still waiting on *Homeworld*, but the free release of *Team Fortress Classic* makes up a little for the delay in *TF2*. A non-Valve add-on pack is also cautiously welcomed.
8	1	**LUCASARTS**--› *Episode 1*. The movie rocks (so we're assuming) but what about the games? We'll have the reviews next issue.
9	8	**ACTIVISION**--› *Battlezone 2*, *Dark Reign 2*, *Q3A*, *Star Trek Voyager*, and others help us forget that *Beneath* is likely dead.
10	10	**INTERPLAY**--› Hanging on is the potential of Interplay's line-up. Most of their *Q4* titles look good.

OTHER CONTENDERS

TAKE TWO--› Buying up companies and internal restructuring could see them emerge at the end of the year as a forceful player.

ION STORM--› Bashing Ion is getting repetitive, but so are the delays. *Daikatana*'s never-ending problems are hindering *Anachronox* and *Deus Ex*.

NOWHERE IN SIGHT

FANTASY FRAG

JUDGE JUDY



WHY WE HATE HER --› **She's a power hungry, helmet-headed ice queen. At first we thought she was kinda cool, in a sadomasochistic military woman sorta way. Now that we've figured out guys just don't stand a chance in her so-called "courtroom," her schtick has gotten really old, really fast. Quotes: "Sir, on my worst day you are not as smart as I am, and I'm on my best day." "Sir, you are lying!" "I see that you are a man. Therefore, by definition, you are dangerous." It's obvious: She hates men. And as men, we hate her too.**

HOW THEY SHOULD BE FRAGGED --› **Since the title of her smart-ass new book of Judy-isms is called "Don't Pee on My Leg and Tell Me It's Raining," she should be put to the test. She should be forced to sing, "It's Raining Men," while Judges Wapner, Joe Brown, Mills Lane, and Ed Koch hike up their robes and do their business on her until she admits she hasn't been laid in 40 years. Then the whole world would know why she's a total bitch: She wants to have sex with her addled, p-whipped bailiff.**

DATING TIPS FOR THE VIRTUAL GUY

When It's Time For Love In The Real World, Will Lara Still Respect You In The Morning?

Okay, we'll admit it: There's more to life than playing videogames. (Hey, you have to run to the fridge for beer, right?) Dating, sex, and maybe even marriage require you to leave the house. Believe us ... we tried it once and can testify that the outside world is a thrill-a-minute experience with awesome 3D graphics and killer sound. Scary? Sure it is, but *X-tra for Men* thinks you have what it takes.

Unlike virtual gals, some "real" women don't have breasts the size of watermelons and waists thinner than your wrist. Shun them! Hold out for your ideal honey or helpfully suggest that Miss Imperfect get herself to a plastic surgeon for an upgrade. She'll be glad you did. And you won't be sad, either.

Just like on AOL, a real life Denise can turn out to be a big-time Dick. Avoid these gender-bending freaks by asking each of your dates if "she" is biologically female. Not only will you protect yourself, but she'll be flattered by your personal interest. A subtle crotch-squeeze now can save you from playing the crying game later.

When dancing, don't tell your date to "shake it, baby." Remember to say "please." Chicks go for that mushy stuff.

If you think your girlfriend has been captured by aliens and turned into a birthing pod, do NOT shoot her, no matter how much she begs. This is called "first-degree murder" and is frowned upon by society. Don't judge her alien-esque behavior hastily ... maybe she just visited her mother, or the gynecologist.

In real life, most women don't have character classes. They call them jobs. Your girlfriend may even expect you to have one, but proudly insist that your Barbarian Shaman status will keep her buffed and swimming in wooly spider fungus for the rest of her days.

Nude codes don't exist in the real world — that's why alcohol was invented. But if you're having trouble getting to your girlfriend's bare essentials, don't worry; there are probably dozens of fan sites dedicated to your girlfriend, each brimming with nude photos. Keep that AdultCheck ID handy!

If your date keeps looking down at her partially exposed breast at the restaurant, don't be offended – she's discreetly checking her health meter. Order more Food Packs to raise her health.

Female Intelligence (FI) is more complex than any AI you've encountered before. The question "Do these pants make me look fat?" has only one answer ("No!"), even if it is not the correct one.

Like FMV women, real ones expect you to talk to them. But unlike FMV, no dialogue choices are given. Get to know your date by asking questions like "What do you know about voodoo?" and "Do you know how to get the Quad Damage from here?"

Know what chicks like. Offer to help your girlfriend design fashion clothes or better yet, create her own teen magazine.

Real gals can't endure the cold as well as their virtual counterparts. Don't expect them to wear a chain-metal bikini on your first winter date. Suggest she wear a tank top and short shorts at first and gradually reduce her clothing to something more acceptable.

Do NOT attempt to rocket-jump your date . It can get messy and they never get enough air. And last, but not least: All women want you. That is your blessing. That is your curse.

Next Month→ Strategies for *Trophy Wife Hunter*.

SEX SECRETS 1.0

Know your RAM, but don't know how to "ram" it home? Cover the bases faster than Mark McGwire on an Andro high with this tutorial from *X-Tra for Men*

Hello, adventurer, I am Flippy Longsword. Sex is a beautiful expression of your love. It's even better when shared with another person. Convincing that perfect girl to answer your booty call doesn't have to be as hard as killing an ice giant ... it just takes experience.

Go to the beautiful girl in front of you. Now select her and regard her. Is she hot? Good. Now ask her to disrobe. Try starting with "Remove shirt". If that does not work, then move on to "Girl, take off blouse." If that still does not work, move to the next girl.

Very good. Women enjoy the sensation of pressing lips together. Try this with her if you can.

You have become better at Kissing (±1)
Great! Now, try fondling her breast.
You have become better at Foreplay (±1)
Excellent! Now say "You're the only one for me, baby."
You have become better at Prevarication – Minor (±1)
Fine. Follow that with "I love you."
You have become better at Prevarication – Major (±1)
Outstanding! Continue to fondle her breast.
You have become better at Foreplay (±1)

That's enough – gaining Foreplay experience points is a low priority for this quest. We're out of time this month, but join us next time when I'll show you how to move to the next level. Until then, gather a party and practice what you've learned.

MARRIAGE WALKTHROUGH

Many of you have written to *X-tra for Men* asking for the solution to the marriage puzzle. We don't normally print "cheats," but are making an exception due to this puzzle's confounding nature.

Go to Fine Jewelry Store. (Not the Discount Store – this is where most readers make their first error.)

There, you will see three rings: The small diamond, the medium diamond, and the large diamond. Buy the large diamond Ring and conceal it.

Go to Girlfriend. Escort Girlfriend to Fancy Restaurant. (Do not take her to the Fast-Food Restaurant by mistake.)

Along the way, Hot Chick may wink at you. Do not wink back! If Girlfriend sees, you may be relieved of some of your Sexual Experience points and jeopardize finishing the puzzle.

Eat Fancy Dinner and boost your energy levels with Cheesecake.

Kneel before Girlfriend. Give her Large Diamond Ring and ask "Girlfriend, will you marry me?"

If you completed the previous steps correctly, she will reply in the affirmative.

Congratulations – Girlfriend has just become Fiancée! Fiancé will solve the puzzles surrounding the dreaded Marriage Ceremony conundrum. However, game will end if you tell Fiance about Bachelor Party. You must go (Hot Chick will be there), but it must be kept a secret.

GAMESCAN
THE LIFESTYLE EDITION

X-TRA For Men's monthly Q&A section where we answer our reader's questions on sex, love, and games from a male perspective.



WING COMMANDER: FREELANCER

Developer → Digital Anvil
Publisher → Microsoft
Release Date → Sometime 2000

Dear Gamescan Forum,
My joystick is smaller than average. Can I still satisfy a game like *WC: Freelancer*, a Privateer-inspired open-ended space combat game with graphics so good you may think it's a FMV?
Stubby

Not to worry, Stubby. Though it's the first non-Origin *Wing Commander* game, series creator Chris Roberts is large and in charge. And he says that it's not the size of your stick, but what you do with it, that counts.



PANZER ELITE

Developer → Wings Simulations GmbH
Publisher → Psygnosis
Release Date → Fall '99

Dear Gamescan Forum,
It's embarrassing, but when I'm hot and bothered with a WWII tank sim like *Panzer Elite*, I shoot my load before I even take command of a platoon. What can I do?
Out Of Ammo

"Premature Etankulation" is a common problem for men. Learn to relax and enjoy the historically accurate 3D environments, units, and weapons, as *Panzer Elite* follows the initial skirmishes between the German and American forces beginning in North Africa.



FORCE 21

Developer --› Red Storm
Publisher --› Red Storm
Release Date --› Fall '99

Dear Gamescan Forum,
I never thought anything like this would happen to a regular Joe like me. In the year 2015, WWIII breaks out between America and China. While commanding up to 16 platoons of tanks, helicopters, and artillery, I made it with 18 year-old triplets in the back of an AH-64D Apache Longbow.
War Dog

Nice try, War Dog, but that sounds a lot like *Force 21* (sans the triplets, of course.) You forgot to mention that it's 3D strategic/tactical wargame with 30 single-player missions and 10 multiplayer maps.



THEOCRACY

Developer --› Philos Labs
Publisher --› Undetermined
Release Date --› Q3 '99

Dear Gamescan Forum
Help! My wife and I have been married for seven years, but our love life is less than lively. Do you have any tips for putting the magic back in our mojo?
Flaccid In Florida

Medieval Inca roleplaying can add that zest you've been missing. Pretend you're playing *Theocracy*, a historical RTS set in ancient Mexico during the Spanish invasion. Fantasy flourishes, like the addition of magic, could set it apart from the pack, but its ongoing troubles finding a publisher hurt its chances.

THE WOMEN WE LOVE TO PLAY

While this month's honey doesn't actually appear in a game, or really have anything to do with games, she is hot and we do have pictures — any complaints? Kristy Hothalfmakedchick is an Ft. Lauderdale based model who was kind enough to wear very little clothing and pose for some pictures. The result is just another graphical treat for **PCXL** readers. For our female readers, just imagine that she is on the cover of *Cosmopolitan* with cover lines like, **"How to Entrap Your Man"** and **"Wild Orgasmic Sex With the Pool Boy."** One question: **Who's the hottest PCXL cover babe? Mirna, Lara, or Kristy? Send your vote to myfavoritebabe@pcxl.com, and we'll tally the votes for a definitive answer to one of life's great questions.**



KINDA GAME RELATED

Like this month's woman we love to play, Kristy, these fine young phillies have absolutely nothing to do with games — or so you thought. The **PCXL** Babe Research Team has actually found their game relation and is now going to share it with you



CATHERINE ZETA JONES

FAMOUS FOR --› Slinky ass maneuvers under infrared lights in *Entrapment*
GAME RELATION (S) --› She stars in a movie with Scottish actor Sean Connery. Scots are featured in the game *Brave heart*. She wes also in *Zorro* which featured swordplay, which is also in many games



KATIE HOLMES

FAMOUS FOR --› Playing hot and cute teen on TV show "Dawson's Creek"
GAME RELATION --› She stars in Go, which has one scene with a bunch of guys, one of whom is British. **PCXL**, the supreme gaming authority, also is a bunch of guys, one of whom is British



REBECCA ROMIJN-STAMOS

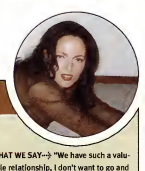
FAMOUS FOR --› Being one of the hottest women in the world to have a white substance on their top lip (milk, we think)
GAME RELATION (S) --› She is married to John Stamos of "Full House," which starred the Olsen Twins, freaky little girls who reportedly play *Barbie Fashion Designer*



SHANIA TWAIN

FAMOUS FOR --› Being the only country singer we'd like to see naked
GAME RELATION (S) --› She is married to Jeff "Mutt" Lang, the producer for Def Leppard. Drummer Rick Allen got his arm cut off in a violent crash, much like the ones seen in the popular game *Carmageddon*

Get a life with Gia DeCarlo



Hanging around the guys at PCXL has taught me some valuable lessons about men, gamers, and their limited interaction with the opposite sex. Each month in this column I aim to share my insight into the female of the species — y'know, the ones with the bumps — in the sincere hope that I can help make your life more complete. After all, there is more to life than games (at least that's what I keep telling the guys). I'll talk about sex, love, relationships, and anything else that involves using your hands for something besides controlling your little *Quake* man.

Despite what you might think, women are a lot like men. We check you out, have erotic fantasies, unfairly judge you from one glance, and yes we like sex — a lot. I am being a traitor to my gender by sharing our secrets, but if you are anything like the PCXL staff, then God knows you could use the help.

The first and most important lesson this month is that women never want what they ask for, unless, of course, it is a diamond. Refer to this translation chart, which you should digest thoroughly before engaging in any communication with a woman.

WHAT WE SAY—› "We want a nice guy with a sense of humor"
LOOSELY TRANSLATED—› We want a hot guy with a cute smile

WHAT WE SAY—› "No, I just want to know the truth"
LOOSELY TRANSLATED—› You better make this lie good

WHAT WE SAY—› "It's okay, I'll do it"
LOOSELY TRANSLATED—› Get off your fat ass or I'll hold it against you forever

WHAT WE SAY—› "You're so sweet"
LOOSELY TRANSLATED—› You're so ugly, you must be nice on the inside

WHAT WE SAY—› "I love talking to you"
LOOSELY TRANSLATED—› Talking is all we'll be doing together

WHAT WE SAY—› "We have such a valuable relationship, I don't want to go and ruin that"
LOOSELY TRANSLATED—› You look like a troll, and you won't be getting any tonight, tomorrow night, next week, or in this lifetime

WHAT WE SAY—› "I'm just not ready for a relationship right now"
LOOSELY TRANSLATED—› I'm not ready for a relationship with you now, or ever

WHAT WE SAY—› "I'd really love another drink"
LOOSELY TRANSLATED—› Did you clean your bedroom? Brush your teeth? Kick your roommate out for the night? If the answers to these questions are "yes", then you are in (so to speak)

Ask Gia

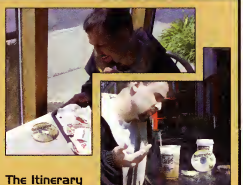
Next month Gia answers all of your burning questions. Just send them to gia@pcxl.com and tune in for her insightful commentaries on life, love, and the ever-frightening world of the opposite sex.

GAME DATER

EXTREME BULLRIDER COURTS EXTREME BULLSHITTER

When we get an especially bad game in the office, we aren't content to just ignore it, we feel it is our duty to give it what it deserves. In the case of *Extreme Bullrider*, even destroying it wasn't good enough — we had to put it through the worst torture imaginable: A date with our own Dan Egger. Here, in his own words, is how it went ...

I was really excited about the date. Though I wouldn't be dating a real girl, this seemed just as good. It shouldn't have been so long: I am handsome and charming (my mother says so). Why can't women see that? Anyway, I wanted to show the disc a good time, so I pulled out all the stops. And remember, if there are any young women out there wanting to date me, it could be you instead of the disc, so dare to dream.





A date with Dan – truly a fate much worse than death. Poor disc.

The Itinerary

5:00 PM—› I pick up the disc at Imagine Media and give it a big hug so it can smell the Brut 33 on my neck
5:30 PM—› Still woozy from the Brut fumes, the disc and I arrive at the restaurant, Burger King
5:35 PM—› I argue with clerk over the validity of my reservations and coupons, and finally agree to take a table near the door
5:40 PM—› Disc falls asleep while I tell numerous stories of my glory days in the Motherlode High School chess club
6:00 PM—› We stop at the local coffee shop for a frappaccino and a mocha. I tell tales of my hernia operation
6:15 PM—› I wake up disc again and we walk to the movie theater across the parking lot
6:30 PM—› Despite the protest of the disc, we end up seeing "Too Many Baldwins!"
8:15 PM—› I convince the disc (now tearful) to sneak into another movie called "David Spade Loses Another Fat Friend"
10:00 PM—› I take the disc to a park, stare at the stars, and talk about *Everquest* while the disc contemplates the horrible, horrible turn its life has taken
11:00 PM—› I return the disc home. Sadly I get no goodnight kiss
9:45 AM—› The disc is found dead, hanging from a noose, victim of an apparent suicide

GAMESCAN

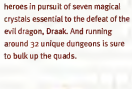


DARKSTONE

Developer —› Delphine Software
Publisher —› GOD
Release Date —› Summer '99

Dear Gamescan Forum,
Is it true that supplements like *Darkstone* build muscle mass? Are they safe?
Slim Jim

There is no definitive proof that supplements will do anything for you but empty your wallet. *Darkstone*, however, is perfectly safe and is really a medieval action/RPG that puts the player in control of two heroes in pursuit of seven magical crystals essential to the defeat of the evil dragon, Draak. And running around 32 unique dungeons is sure to bulk up the quads.



MIGHT AND MAGIC VII

Developer —› 3DO
Publisher —› 3DO
Release Date —› The Future

Dear Gamescan Forum,
I am a swordsman who likes to hang out with my buddies — a thief, an archer, and a sorcerer — more than dating women. Am I a poof?
Gay Blade

Close male friendships are important regardless of sexual orientation. Try a little *Might & Magic VII*, the latest sequel in which your buddies and you can continue your RPG adventures together fighting new monsters through the land of Erathia.



ABOMINATION

Developer --› Hothouse
Publisher --› Eidos
Release Date --› September '99

Dear Gamescan Forum,
Believe it or not, unsightly back hair has made me an abomination to the opposite sex. What can I do to shave the savage beast?
Sasquatch

There's electrolysis, but the real abomination is the unfortunate name of *Abomination — an X-Com*-ish realtime, team-based tactical combat game set in a plague-ridden future. Even if the game is excellent, it is going to be very hard resisting the headline, "*Abomination*: The Name Says It All."



URBAN CHAOS

Developer --› Mucky Foot
Publisher --› Eidos
Release Date --› September '99

Dear Gamescan Forum,
My life is like "Green Acres" and I'm a Gabor sister. My girlfriend wants to move to the country, but I'm a city boy. Dump or hoe?
The Ultra-Urbanite

Hoe. (And we're not talking Divine Brown, here.) Just ask Darci and Roper, two cops in *Urban Chaos* who have to ride the subway, motorcycles, and even a hang glider in their ongoing efforts to keep the streets safe in this third-person 3D action game.

PCXL CLASSIFIEDS

Jobs the industry just might be advertising for

EXTREME, EXTREME, EXTREME

Looking for an EXTREME individual to work on our *award-winning EXTREME brand of games. Ability to be EXTREME is much more important than any programming or artistic skills. In fact, we really worry about any of that nonsense. Please contact **Head Games Publishing** EXTREME-ly soon for more on this EXTREME offer.*
**A suicide award is still an award dammit!*

Accountant

Major videogame publisher is in dire need of somebody who can turn a $380 million loss into a profit. Qualified candidate will be fluent in Japanese ass-kissing and must be an extremely "creative" number shuffler. Send inquiries, donations, and 32k's to **Sega of America.**

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Major PC game magazine is looking to replace its EIC. He has grown cocky, lazy, and is generally a pain in the ass. Qualified candidates will posses strong English skills, good phone manners, taste, decorum, and everything else the soon-to-be-former EIC lacked. To replace this slacker, send resume and 50 good reasons we should fire Mike Salmon's ass to **PCXL**.

IN SEARCH OF TWO OLD FRIENDS

I made a HUGE mistake. All is forgiven. Come home before my career drops two cup sizes as well. Call me, we have to talk.
Love, **Pamela Anderson**

Smelly, rude types needed

Major PC games publisher was recently acquisitioned by much larger French PC games publisher and is looking for someone to help us communicate with our new parent company. Experience in the games industry, fluent French, and perhaps time spent as a rude waiter would be very helpful. Please contact **Accolade.**

STUPID, LOUD-MOUTHED, VASTLY OVERWEIGHT AMERICAN TYPES NEEDED

Ze largyest publisher in zee entire vorld has bought out silly Amerricahn company, and we need a ... how you say ..."A-hole?" to run misinformation to ignorahnt Amerricahns who actually believe zey will keep their stupeed jobs. Anyone who iz villing to zell out zeir countrymen should zend cheese, garlic, and zeir girlfriends to **Infogames.** P.S. Woody, we are going to zteal your girlfriend!

Looking for a clue

Technological genius, industry hero, and game designer extraordinaire desperately seeking a fricking clue. Everything I did was perfect, but now I find myself putting my latest game on a colored wood-processor before bringing it to the PC. I used to know that Macs were only good for graphic design, but now I'm stuck believing the damn machine can actually play games. Please help me, before it's too late!

FAT TRIMMER

Publishing giant is seeking individual with common sense, business sense, and a firm hand to kill unnecessary games and make snot-nosed developers actually release good games. Contact Eidos **Interactive** for more information.

ANYONE?

Still waiting, still searching, still hoping. Contact **Ion Storm.**

PCXL SPECIAL REPORT

ASS-KICKING UP BY 64 PERCENT

The overall quantity and frequency of "ass-kicking" performed by the **PCXL** staff has increased sharply since the magazine's inception last year, experts recently reported.

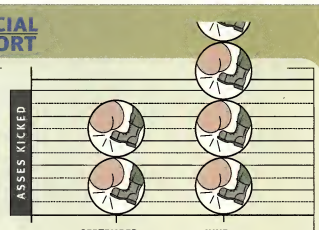
"We found that the Inaugural September 1998 issue of **PC Accelerator** kicked a 'helluva' lot of ass," said Walter Higgins, a renowned authority on ass-kicking, "The January issue improved on this by kicking 'major, major' ass. That's enough ass to circle the circumference of the Earth ... twice!"

The July issue of **PCXL** is expected to kick a "sh-t"-load of ass, or enough ass that if it were stacked on the ground, one ass on top of the other, the pile of asses could reach the moon. Calculations predict that if the act of kicking that amount of ass could be converted into energy, it would be enough to heat the city of Chicago for one week.

"The bulk of ass being kicked here is almost obscene," noted an industry analyst who wished to remain anonymous in order to preclude the chance of his own ass being kicked.

Why aren't more magazines trying the "ass-kicking" formula? "Most of the industry seems to be geared towards 'sucking ass' or 'being ass'," admitted one competing magazine's editor, "But if 'kicking ass' is what the readers want, then we may have to look into it."

The editor admitted that his own ass had been kicked by **PCXL** "a lot" in the past and expressed concern for the safety of his ass in the future.



Critics are not quite as glib about the long-term success of the ass-kicking strategy. "The ass simply should not be kicked," says Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D)-Connecticut, "Not by a magazine, not by anybody for that matter. We must think of the safety of our children ... and of their asses."

Reader support is what drives **PCXL**'s editors in their ongoing commitment to kicking ass before it becomes a threat to the game-buying consumer.

"We have no plans to stop kicking ass," asserted **PCXL** Editor in Chief Mike Salmon, "In fact, we believe we're going to kick a whole lot more ass before we stop kicking it."

That may be an understatement. **PCXL** has commissioned the U.S. Department of Weights and Measures to implement a new unit of measurement for kicking ass. The **"PCXL,"** the highest standard of ass-kicking quantification possible, will become standard on January 1, 2000.

For more stories like this every day, check out our website at www.pcxl.com.



As expert ass-kickers, we say Claudia's ass kicks ass.

PCXL Minion of the Month

YOU TOO CAN BE A HERO

You may remember our Guerilla Campaign back in Issue one, where we asked readers to visit newsstands and decorate them with **PCXL**. Well, now we are opening a special subsection of this campaign to people who work at retail locations that carry **PCXL**. Whether it's EB, Borders, or some liquor store in Idaho, we want you! We want you to come up with creative ways to sell **PCXL** at your store.

Our first **PCXL** Minion of the Month is Ethan Kidhardt of Electronics Boutique 362 in Marlboro, Massachusetts. He goes the extra mile to ensure that shoppers get the chance to enjoy **PCXL**. His sales pitch: "Look, if you want a magazine that sucks, get that, that, or that (pointing to lame competition). But if you want a magazine that compares hardware to fly hunnies, get THIS!" (Pick up a copy of **PCXL**, angelic chords cue in.) But that's not all — he also managed to get our issue displayed in the manager's choice window.

For his assistance to the righteous cause, above and beyond the call of duty, we offered money, games, and women, but all our hero wanted was a picture of Jennifer Love Hewitt dedicated to him. Consider it done.

If you want to be a **PCXL** Minion Of The Month, just write us with your sordid tales of helping the public get their **PCXL**, and what you would like in return. Send pictures, results, and prize requests to minion@pcxl.com.





Ethan Kidhardt, our first Minion of the Month, gives you his two favorite women, "Blue Girl" (June PCXL) and Jennifer Love Hewitt.

Girlfriend of the Month

YES, SOME PCXL READERS HAVE REAL LIVE GIRLFRIENDS

Not all of our readers are lucky enough to have a girlfriend, which is why we're asking some of our more fortunate readers to share. T. Devon Sharkey has both a girlfriend and a pretty common fantasy — to see her dressed up as Lara Croft.

Unlike Mike's girlfriend, who continually slaps him whenever he asks, Mr. Sharkey managed to convince his bird to don the khaki shorts for Halloween. Being a true humanitarian, Mr. Sharkey also decided to share his good fortune with us — and we pass on this goodwill to you, our lonely reader. Since this is his real girlfriend (and to maintain a certain decency — yes, we do know what the word means), we'd like to request that no serious lusting occurs, but a little bit should be fine.

Just 'cause you don't have a girlfriend, doesn't mean you can't share. Maybe your sister is hot, or how about your mom? Some of you may even have an especially cute cousin or friend. All we ask is that you take a picture and share the beauty with your fellow readers. Send pictures to umustbehigh@pcxl.com and become an instant celebrity. We take no responsibility for any face-slipping caused by less-than-adventurous girlfriends out there, so remember, you're on your own.



Dana Scholle of Atlanta, Georgia

GAMESCAN

Here at *X-tra for Men* we are interested in something besides *Everquest*. Write in with your questions on these manlier subjects.

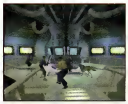


CUTTHROATS

Developer --› Hothouse
Publisher --› Eidos
Release Date --› September '99

Dear Gamescan Forum,
The new guy at my firm has his eyes on my position and will backstab his way to the top. How do I protect my back from this creep?
On The Fast Track

To survive corporate office politics, you've got to be ruthless. Much like the pirates in *Cutthroats*, you must captain your ship and make your fortune engaging in terror, violence, robbery, and extortion. Too bad real life isn't an RTS with over 70 ports to sack and pillage.



SABOTEUR

Developer --› Eidos
Publisher --› Eidos
Release Date --› September '99

Dear Gamescan Forum,
What is the real secret to getting rock-hard abs?
Joe Six Pack

From what we've seen, the best way is to become a ninja. Shin, the star of *Saboteur*, is a modern-day Ninja who must rescue his sister, Ami, from the evil CyberGen, armed with a variety of weapons and his sidekick dog, Shiro. And Shin's stomach looks like a washboard.



OMIKRON: THE NOMAD SOUL

Developer --> Quantic Dream
Publisher --> Eidos
Release Date --> September '99

Dear Gamescan Forum,
My doctor wants me to visit a proctologist, but I say "no way." Am I being stubborn?
Tight-Ass

Hey, relax! A finger in the ol' bunghole is a futuristic action/adventure 3D experience where you fight in third-person against a hideous and ancient soul-stealing force, swapping bodies along the way and visiting strip clubs. Oh, wait a minute ... that's actually *Omikron*. That other thing makes us cringe. What was I thinking?



ANACHRONOX

Developer --> Ion Storm
Publisher --> Eidos
Release Date --> Early 2000

Dear Gamescan Forum,
I'm always late for appointments and forgetting deadlines. How do I budget my time better?
Tim Hill

Set goals and stick to them. Take, for example, Ion Storm. If they had done that with *Anachronox*, (an RPG utilizing the *Quake II* engine about a trek across the galaxy and three dimensions looking for a long-dead alien race and the forces bent on destroying our universe), it would've been released by now instead of getting pushed back again.

The Heat-O-Meter
SPRING TRAINING EDITION

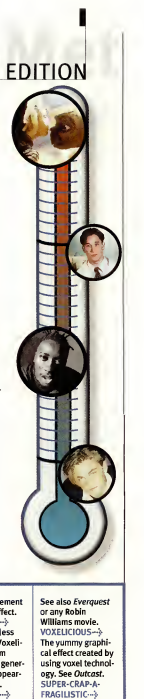
WHAT'S HOT

LICK ME--> To commemorate the '80s, the U.S. Post Office will be offering stamps celebrating video games, *E.T. The Extra Terrestrial*, and personal computers. And we thought they might choose something frivolous.

RENAISSANCE MAN--> Michael Crichton, creator of *Jurassic Park* and "E.R.," has founded a game development house called Timeline Studios. Now all he needs is a good license to base a game on.

VOODOO DOODOO--> 3Dfx's commercials lampooning self-important company image ads are hilarious. Now what is it they sell again?

IT'S EASY BEING GREEN--> Hasbro's *Frogger* has been at the top of the sales charts for months. But we still can't find anyone willing to admit that they actually bought a copy.



WHAT'S COLD

MYST OPPORTUNITIES--> Rumor has it that *Myst 3* is currently in the works at Mindscape. Luckily, the strategy guide, tie-in novel, and soundtrack have already been completed.

TANG FU--> Activision has confirmed that it will publish a fighting game starring members of the Wu-Tang Clan. Now we know why Ol' Dirty Bastard has been in jail so often — research!

NO *MORTYR* HERE--> A controversy is brewing because some retailers are threatening not to stock the new Nazi-shooter, *Mortyr*, due to its graphic cover art and content. I-Magic is also afraid the boycott may give the game too much free publicity.

UP THE ACADEMY--> From the same people who judged the Holyfield-Lewis fight ... The Academy Of Interactive Arts and Sciences selected *Rogue Squadron* as a "Game Of The Year" nominee in their second annual Interactive Achievement Awards.

UNDER FIRE--> Parents of three schoolgirls slain in a high school shooting have filed a $130 million dollar lawsuit against violent game manufacturers, porn sites, and the makers of the movie, *The Basketball Diaries*. It's about time those companies began to take responsibility for other people's actions!

PCXL GLOSSARY PART II
THE VERSATILITY OF ASS

Have you ever tried to describe something, but couldn't find a word that really worked? We have too, but instead of stumbling around saying, "urrrn" a lot, we invent our own damn words.

Our descriptors often defy ... uhh ... description (for lack of a better word). We figure if we use these words enough in our daily lives, then maybe Webster's will need to add a new PCXL section. If not, then screw those anal-retentive bastards.

ASSTACULAR--> Something or someone that is spectacularly ass in its nature or being.

BABEDOM--> The mythical fantasy land to which all women (yes, all of 'em — even the really ugly ones) aspire to reach.

BLANKENSTEIN-WHATEVERHER-NAMEIS--> Fictional last name used for extremely hot models whose real name we can't, nor care to remember.

COPLETE--> In the Empire there was a severe shortage of the letter "m," or we had a little typo in our Star Wars feature (your call).

CRACKIFIED--> A state that is achieved by someone who is mind-bogglingly clueless or constantly hopped up on crack. See "Rob Smith."

CRAPTACULAR--> Something or someone that is spectacularly crappy in its nature or being.

EXTREME ASSTITUDE--> The ultimate in "assness." Extreme assstitude is reserved for only the most heinous of those that are ass.

MANNISH--> A derogatory term used to describe women with large adam's apples, hairy knuckles, and/or thick eyebrows.

PANTS--> A word which defies descrIption but is always humorous when used inappropriately. Can be substituted for any noun in a serious-sounding statement for comedic effect.

PIXELICIOUS--> Considerably less yummy than Voxelicious, this term describes the generally horrific appearance of pixels.

POLYTHEISM--> The belief that God is made entirely of polygons.

SASSTERS--> Those who possess sass and can be referred to as sassy. Example: "Parker Posey and Katie Holmes are the premiere sassters of this generation, bar none."

ROB SMITH--> See "Crackified."

SISSIFIED--> Being transformed from manly man into sissy boy, usually by wimpy games, women, or heart warming moments.

See also *Everquest* or any Robin Williams movie.

VOXELICIOUS--> The yummy graphical effect created by using voxel technology. See *Outcast*.

SUPER-CRAP-A-FRAGILISTIC--> Crap in a "Mary Poppins-isn't-that-cute-but-still-a-load-of crap" way.

WUSSINESS--> Act of wuss that clearly demonstrates a feat that can only be described as less than manly.

Got more words? Don't understand some of our pontificating? (Look that one up yourself.)

Send an email to the PCXL at thosewordsare-madeup@pcxl.com

A TRIBUTE TO PAMELA ANDERSON

The removal of Pamela Anderson's (we refuse to acknowledge Pam's "marriage" to trouser-snake-in-the-grass, Tommy Lee) silicon implants have put the **PCXL** editorial staff in a thoughtful mood. It's a time when we must quietly reflect on those things most important to us and to appreciate what we take for granted.

Now that Pam's former tenants have moved on to that great medical landfill barge in the sky, we take a tearful look back at stars in the making ... before the horrible tragedy that tore them away from us forever.





The many moods of two master thespians: Heaving, pendulous, petulant, pert, perky, pouty, proud, defiant, and self-willed.



Good news for computer chip manufacturers: The silicon shortage is finally over!





SPOTTHEFAKEAD and win *fabulous prizes

YOU ARE ALSO FREE TO LAUGH, IF YOU SO DESIRE

Some of our brighter readers (if such a beast exists) may have spotted a phony advertisement for a game called *Rat Hunter* in our last issue. We had so much fun making it, that we've decided to make it a monthly feature. And what monthly feature would be complete without *Fabulous Prizes for the readers bright enough to spot this falsified ad? It could be you.

From now on (this issue included) we encourage you to rigorously search our hallowed pages for the ad which "just ain't right." When (and if) you spot the ad, just send a note to lmnofool@pcxl.com and include the page number, issue number, and game(s) we are mocking. We will take the names of the qualified candidates and randomly pick one winner each month.

For those not in the know, "ads" are those colorful bits in our magazine that you usually skip over searching for babe pictures. Skip by them no more, and you may soon be the lucky winner of one of our *Fabulous Prizes.

*Note: Whenever you see this asterisk say the words, "Fabulous Prizes" out loud in your big announcer voice. It's also worth mentioning that our definition of "Fabulous Prizes" may differ slightly from your definition of "Fabulous Prizes."



The universal manual...

[FOR MEN] THE MANLY WAY TO INSTALL AND ENJOY EVERY COMPUTER GAME IN EXISTENCE

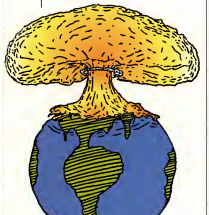
Playing games in the manner of a real X-tra man involves one unbreakable law: Never, ever, ever read the manual. Throw them away. Toss 'em. While this certainly is a manly strategy, occasionally you will find yourself searching for rules, button layouts, and troubleshooting tips. So, just in case you do find yourself in need of a little help, we've created the solution ... a never-fail universal manual. Just think of it like those universal television remotes. And trust us, it will work for any game.

EPILEPSY WARNING

Although cases of seizures caused by computer games are as rare as a tasteful moment on the WB network, every game is required to have this warning. So remember, if you find yourself twitching on the ground, vomit to the side, don't swallow your tongue, and don't sue the publisher.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

--› [Your system] plus 166 MHz
--› [Your system] plus 16 MB RAM
--› Just enough hard drive space to make you uninstall one or more of your favorite games



The future — according to most computer games.

CD CARD SUPPORT

--› The next generation of your chipset
--› An obscure chipset you've never heard of
--› The chipset everyone told you to buy, but you didn't

INSTALLING THE GAME

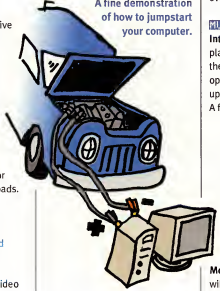
1. Insert the CD and run install.exe.
2. After computer crashes, restart and go on www.nameofdeveloper.com/patches and download install1.06.exe.
3. Run patch.
4. Choose between compact (delete one favorite game), typical (delete your entire drive including windows), and full install (upgrade computer to holographic memory).
5. Realize the game actually takes twice the hard drive space listed.
6. Delete the rest of the games you enjoy.
7. Run install again.
8. Grab beer, pizza, and complete works of Tolstoy for entertainment while game loads.
9. After you accidentally install Direct X3, go to http://www.microsoft.com/directX/orMoronsWhoClickedTheWrongButton.html to reinstall Direct X6.
10. Install several obsolete video players on your machine.
11. Start game.
12. After computer crashes, restart and go on www.nameofdeveloper.com/patches to download nameofgame1.06.exe.

THE BACK STORY

[Name of Game] is set in the dark apocalyptic world of the near future. After man destroyed the environment using nuclear bombs and other clichés, the world became bland and dark. It has been replaced by a world where bad guys try to kill you for no apparent reason and where you can kill them with impunity.

As [fill in blank with a random grouping of words that include synonyms for death, sharp stuff, or various hard things. Examples: Cutter Slade, John Blade, and Tiger Woods], your job is to move through the barely comprehendable storyline, kill everything that moves, and do other stuff that you did in *Quake*, *Warcraft II*, or a combination of the two.

Note: Don't waste time worrying about the story ... It doesn't affect the gameplay in the slightest.



A fine demonstration of how to jumpstart your computer.

THE MAIN MENU

At the startup screen you will be allowed to choose between the following buttons:

OPTIONS

Sounds--› Click between low quality, high quality, and ultra THX surround sound. (This option is merely cosmetic. No matter what you click, it sounds the same.)

Graphics--› Here you can change the game resolution, but remember, any changes will result in a blue screen, requiring you to use jumper cables and intravenous drips to restart your computer.

Controls--› Here you can remap your controls, but if you change a single option, it will, in fact, wipe out another more important button you'll need later on.

Customize--› Here you can change your player model or army in numerous ways. However, you will still be virtually indistinguishable from any other character you face.

Advanced Controls--› Anything you change in this menu will force you to re-install the game if you ever want to play it again.

MULTIPLAYER

Internet--› Click this button to play extremely laggy games over the Internet. Try [name of developer].net so you can get matched up with people all over the world. A few brief hints:

--› The beginner section is full of experts looking to prey on newbies for a laugh.
--› The intermediate section is full of experts looking to improve their ranking.
--› The expert section is full of experts who will destroy you because they can.

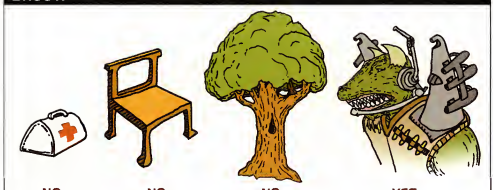
Modem--› Click this button to play wildly laggy games over a phone line with a friend, who will no longer be a friend because you told him to buy the game based on an ecstatic review in [random geeky game mag].

LAN--› This acronym is only for game magazine reviewers who have complete access to the office network. It is included to get better reviews. Don't even bother to try at home unless you've got much cash and patience.

SINGLE PLAYER

This is the part you play until you can go no further without buying the official [name of game] strategy guide for $14.99.

SHOOT?



NO NO NO YES

HOW TO PLAY

Here we have broken this down into two sections: Action and Strategy. For those games that have action/strategy written on the box, play a quick (free) game of mix-and-match.

ACTION

Use weapon to shoot whatever moves
Example: Anything that moves on screen, you shoot until it blows up

Find key and open corresponding door
Example: You can figure this one out for yourself

Use number buttons to switch between weapons ...

Standard···› Weak weapon everyone starts with (just like the one found in *Quake*)

Machine gun···› High rate of fire weapon used until you find something better (Example: The machine gun in *Quake*)

Plasma gun···› Shoots blasts of energy, offers minimal damage, but more importantly, displays special effects (similar to the one in *Quake*)

Rocket Launcher···› This weapon blows up bad guys but doesn't hurt you when you rocket jump (see *Quake* again)

Big Gun···› This gun is a ridiculously unbalanced weapon that wipes out a full room of people and makes deathmatch completely unfair. (Note: If the game you are playing has *Turok* in the title, each and every weapon falls under this category.)

STRATEGY

Click on units, build bases, and send units after enemy
Example: Land on map, build base, chase enemy to four corners of map, start again on next level

UNITS

Gatherer···› Basic unit worth nothing in battle

Speedy Unit···› Speedy unit worth nothing in battle

Basic Medium Unit···› Medium strength unit, make lots of these and rush them at opponents

Air Unit···› Flying unit worth nothing in battle

Heavy Unit···› Heavy unit worth nothing in battle

TROUBLESHOOTING

Problem···› My screen is black
Answer···› Either your monitor is not plugged in or you have entered this game's special dark level. If you are experiencing the latter, run around and use any weapon with lighting effects. This level's two purposes are to show off the lighting effects of your weapons and to cover up boring level design.

Problem···› My computer freezes when I start the game
Answer···› Your machine is far too archaic to run this game. In fact, any computer on the market is far too archaic to run this game. We suggest you wait two years, then buy a top of the line computer and 3D card. By then we will have a patch that fixes this problem.

Problem···› My game plays exactly like other games
Answer···› There is a conflict between your need for creativity and the need of money-hungry industry executives to turn out crap. However, we are currently working on an innovation patch that should make the game slightly different than the titles we copied. Look for it as soon as we can find another game to copy.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Visit the support site at http://www.nameofdeveloper.com/customerservice.html. Once you receive the Forbidden 404 message, try to call the customer service number. After you've waited several hours on hold, you may want to fax your request. All faxes will be forwarded to the garbage can. They will only get back to you If the company encounters extreme periods of boredom. If you still can't get ahold of customer service, try the mail address, but really, what would be the point?

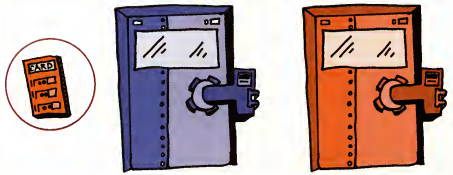
HINTS AND TIPS

If you need help on this game, call the company's tip line (number found on nameofdeveloper.com). At $1.99 per minute, you will hear a reading of this exact manual in a very slow, deliberate manner.

COMPLAINTS

If you are not happily fragging away by this point, we suggest that you write in and voice your complaints to letters@pcxl.com. If the gentlemen in this department ever stop playing *Everquest*, they may help you, ignore you, or maybe even make fun of your whiny ass. Enjoy your game.

THIS KEY CARD GOES WITH WHICH DOOR?



NO YES

STOP THE PRESSES! QUAKE III IS HERE

Damn those Id Software people, have they no consideration? Shortly before our final deadline for the current issue they decided the time was right to release the *Quake III: Arena Test*. Not a demo, just a technology test. What are we supposed to do? Finish the magazine on time? Hell no. Some *Quake III: Arena* playing was absolutely required. This is our report on how it's all shaping up.

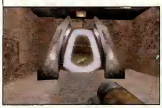


RATING

Somewhere between *Quake I* and *Unreal*

GRAPHICS

To say *QIII* is eye-candifed would be putting it mildly. With 32-bit textures (for those with the right hardware), bright colored lighting everywhere, and funky particle effects — it almost has an *Unreal* look to it. The much-heralded curved surfaces are present but not overused, adding a more subtle impact on the whole look. All those bright explosions and weapon effects can make it tough to pick out targets at times. Another thing that should be mentioned is that it seems the vertical field of view has been reduced from *Quake II*, so there's less room for aiming variations in the up-down plane. This is a throwback to *Quake I*'s vertical field of view. So, shooting rockets at the feet is gonna take some getting used to, 'cause you'll be shooting well in front of targets at first.



SOUND

Hmm, not that big of an impression. *Half-Life* has the realistic solid reverb sound effects and Id was wise not to try to ape them. Placeholder sound effects from *Quake II* are a little disappointing — but of course, it's just a test!

DEPTH

The two maps are just a tiny fraction of what's to come. The second of them, with its *Matrix*-style leaps is pure chaos. Developers say Map One is best with six players, but can be played by 4 — 8, while Map Two can be played by 3 — 8, primarily via LAN. The gameplay is exactly the same beast as *Quake II*, but that's the beauty of it. It's not about trying something new in Id's case, it's about tweaking the means of what is becoming a pretty serious form of competition — the only true form for many gamers. And really, Id's the only one who can get away with coasting from a gameplay point of view in our opinion.



DESIGN

The new weapons and the overall balance are generally positive changes. The more concentrated blast of the shotgun, for example, makes it a much more viable weapon at mid range. The choice of machinegun as the spawn weapon was also a good choice. But maybe the change that most affects gameplay has been the return of some of *Quake 1*'s rocket launcher dominance. The rockets move faster although the damage is under control. The plasma gun is solid, like a hyperblaster with more margin for error, and no spindown time. And then there's the railgun ... as a railgun junkie it was really disappointing to see this weapon not be quite so instantaneous over long distances, and therefore losing some of its overall effectiveness.

OVERALL

A real arcade look to the whole thing is a big standout — more primary colors, less grungy brownness. Player names appearing above the target in your crosshair is a good gameplay addition. As always, the action is fast, furious, and frenetic. Already it plays as classic *Quake* should, with the graphical enhancements being the major feature. It's fun enough to keep us occupied until the final thing ships around October.





Cool! Another excuse for us to blow off deadlines!!!

FEEDBACK

letters@pcxl.com



--> Over the last month we've received numerous letters from our new recruits, fresh from the ranks of *PC Games* (R.I.P.), saying how much they've enjoyed getting to know us. From the bottom of our black little hearts, we say "Mercy Buckets." We're glad to discover that despite your somewhat shady past, you really are as obsessed with the same things we are: Games and girls. Keep letting us know how we're doing. We'll be devilishly at work bringing you the hard facts about the latest games on the shelves (and searching for porn in the process).

THIS AIN'T YOUR LITTLE BROTHER'S PC MAG!

What an awesome mag. The difference from *PC Gomes* to *PC Acceleratar* is definitely noticeable ...

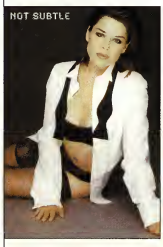
At first I thought, "Oh, great, they are sending me some crap unheard of magazine to fulfill my subscription to my fave mag (*PC Gomes*)," then I started reading and now I know that this is just as good and maybe even a better magazine.

I particularly like the way that you ever-so-subtly added lots of hot babes, and integrated it very well with the mag.

And thanks for the tips on how to get away with gaming at work ... VERY HELPFUL ...

The Konquerer
klashn@netzero.net

Thanks Konquerer, fitting babes ever-so-subtly into the magazine is more difficult than you might think. Here's a quick example of the right and wrong way to do it.





If there's one thing we are, it's friggin' subtle.

I have been managing a software store for the last five years. I can't say which, but I'll give you a hint: Not EB. My point however, is that in all my time in this business I have been inundated with crappy, uninformed, BORING magazines devoted to PC games. Your magazine is fresh, well laid out, informative, accurate, and funny as HELL. I can read it all month and still find new stuff. It's rare that I laugh out loud while reading a game magazine, but it happens all the damn time with PCXL. All other game mags should pack up and quit, because the gods of magazine making have arrived. I repeat: You guys kick ass.

Tony Pagano
Store Manager,
A big important retailer I can't name because I don't feel like losing my job.

It's always good to hear from our fans on the retail side, especially those who sell magazines, hardware, SOFTWARE, etc ...

I just received my first trial issue of PCXL. Honestly, I found it to be sexist, immature, not politically correct, unforgiving, and reeking of vile humor. So I thought you would like to know what I'm going to do with your invitation to subscribe ... Subscribe of course! I love it! Keep up the good work.

JIM S.

Well, thanks Jim. People often describe us as "reeking of vile humor," but it's rare that they mean it in a good way. You do mean it in a good way, don't you?

INSULTING READERS CAN BE FUN!

Why don't you just bugger off and stop taking the piss out of us poor sad Brits. Pick on someone else.

Rich

OK, Icelanders smell of bunk, except Bjork, she's pixielicious, not to be confused with "pixelicious" (see glossary). Feel better?

You should put more porn where you can see stuff. I paid $8.99 for what?? Crap? PORN PORN PORN!!!!!

Colby Cassens- Houston, TX

Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. and Mrs. Cassens ... Our readers!

LOVE SONGS AFTER DARK

Once again, Official **PCXL** lyricist H.E. Pennypacker pens another beautiful melody ... enjoy!

H.E. Pennypacker Presents:
"Rob's Song" in Q minor
But first a joke...
"What do a plumber and Rob Smith have in common?"
Two words: "Pipe" and "crack."

The Rob Smith Song
(sung to the tune of "Why Don't You Get a Job?" by Offspring)

Rob Smith, exec editor, is o Brit.
He soys "Arse" every doy;
He thinks Dalkatana will be o hit,
Despite oil those frikkin deloys.

He sits on his oss ond works his honds to the bone,
Killing thousonds of Everquest rats;
But when it comes to reol life,
Rob is quite alone,
Cuz he coiled Tribes o piece of crop.

(Chorus)

Take it back, take it back, Rob,
ioy off of the crack,
Why don't you just be like the guys?
It's not right, it's not right, just give up on the pipe,
And join in o LAN game of Tribes.

I guess bein' an editor was just too much,
I think that it's got to his broin.
I guess bein' an editor was just too much,
He's ployed one too many o game.

(Chorus)

REALITY CHECK

You show Gordon Freeman on page 30 in the line-up without black-rimmed glasses. Gordon always wears his glasses. This is absolutely unforgivable and an insult to *Half-Life*.

John Hamilton

We actually Photoshop-ed the glasses off because of a company policy which bars us from using gratuitous pictures of Charlie Sheen. We figured the resemblance was a little too scary to print.

OUR KIND OF WOMAN

I'm not sure if many of your writers are aware that beautiful women have brains, nor do I care. I've been reading your magazine for several months, and have just a few comments to make.
I only read it because my husband buys it, and it outlasts my bubble baths on Saturdays. Most copies are next to the tub and have become wrinkled and rather bent, usually from being accidentally dipped in the water while I



letters@pcxl.com

FEEDBACK

reached for the beer or dinner my man brings me, but sometimes because I fall asleep.

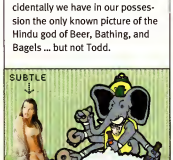
Honestly, what got me interested was that it was in the bathroom at the same time I was, and we were both going to be there for a while. I then discovered you apparently piss off women. Cool. I like being mad.

But how could I be mad? Your attitude is exactly what I encourage in men. My husband calls me his goddess, now how the hell could anyone be upset with a magazine that obviously worships women the way you do? Fact is, confident women LOVE to be adored. It's the insecure ones that write to whine. Bugger off.

Keep it up. I love when you dis, make fun of, OR worship women.

Denise
Goddess of Beer, Bathing, and Bagels, oh, and of Todd

Thanks for the letter, Denise. Coincidentally we have in our possession the only known picture of the Hindu god of Beer, Bathing, and Bagels ... but not Todd.



Damn! Thanks to your rating system, and your "perfect 10," I now have sex dreams involving two women, namely Christa Miller and Claire Danes. Then I remembered that Christa stars with Drew Carey, and that Claire had to endure Leo Decrapio (sure, HE's manly). If that's the competition, maybe it'll be more than a dream someday.

Don

Ahh, hot girls with low standards: # 4 in our list of reasons for living.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

On page 83 of the May issue, the profile of Jenna Jameson states she is best known for the "erotic scene with a speaker in Howard Stern's *Private Parts*." You idiots. That's not her. That's just some wanna-be. The real Jenna is the one who gets naked in front of Stern in the studio. Other than that mishap, PCXL is the shit. Keep up the good work.

Chris White

The management of *PC Accelerator* wishes to express its deepest regret at the grievous error that occurred on page 83 of the May issue. The entire staff was punished and forced to watch a Jenna Jameson movie marathon. We will not make the same mistake twice.

I'm working right now at an Internet provider company in Montreal and I just purchased the May issue. The whole issue rocks my world, especially the play at work section. I laughed so hard while reading it that my hard Hard-Ass Supervisor came and ripped the magazine out of my hands before reminding me that I'm being paid to work. Minutes later I heard him laughing. Maybe your magazine has turned him into a gentle, Hands-On supervisor. Keep the good sense of humor and you've got a loyal subscriber for life.

Duc Thang Lieu alias Truman

Thanks. Now get back to work! Your subscription check bounced!

I have the ultimate proof that Rob Smith is on crack: In the March 1998 issue of *PC Games* he gave *Quake 2* a C in multiplayer. A lowly, pathetic C!

eXXon

In defense of Rob, at that time, *Quake 2* multiplayer was a buggy mess, and the score was justified. But, if you are looking for proof that Rob is on crack, just look at his views on *Tribes* and the crack pipes that regularly show up on his desk late at night.

LOVE, GIA STYLE

My Beloved Gia,

I thought I'd take a shot at wooing you, too. So here goes: I was born in Paris in 1973 and have traveled the world extensively (actually, St. Louis, 1953, and I haven't left Texas but once in the last 20 years).

I am manly and virile and have been told that I have the appearance of a Greek god (scrawny, in need of Viagra, long hair, skinny legs and a pot-belly). In my spare time I read Nietzsche and do impressionistic paintings while listening to Wagner (look for Playmate links, and scour PCXL hoping for pictures of Jennifer Love Hewitt).

Well, if you're not yet thoroughly captivated, let me assure you that I have the mind of a yogi (occasionally cognizant of my surroundings), the heart of a saint (crotchety and irritable), and the physical control of a fakir (enough said about that, already).

As I am sure that you are the fairest creature to ever grace God's green Earth (actually, your picture is kind of blurry due to failing eyesight – but you are beauty incarnate, right?) I await with bated breath your pronouncement of true love.

My Undying Love (unless, of course, I die laughing while reading PCXL),

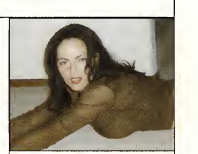
Robin Selover
rselover@earthlink.net

From Gia,

Thank you Robin, I loved your letter. I would love to see you (in your dreams), and I think you sound wonderful (they pay me to write this, you know). Just send me a letter and we will set up a day and a time for a date. I am open anytime after 6:00 PM February 12, 2066 (unless I am not yet dead, then I will postpone).

Thanks for reading,

PS: Funny is sexy ... why else do you think I work with the PCXL guys ... Have you seen the staff photos? Eeek!



In this picture, Gia is actually not wearing pants.

PCXL IN PRISON

Hello folks,

I just finished reading the April issue of PCXL and I thought it was your normal mag until ... I got to the "48 Hours of Hell." I don't think I have ever laughed that damn hard. And to make things worse I woke up some of the inmates at an undisclosed jail dormitory while at work (where reading personal literature is prohibited, and it's so quiet you can hear mosquitoes fart) and almost had grievances wrote on me for the disturbance.

But I told them I would get them a subscription too (lost 12 damn dollars) and there was peace again. Keep up the excellent work fellas ... and, oh yeah, the *Starcraft* doll (or marine) was dazzling in the mid-length cut with his Zerg date.

J.D.
deputyjd@f-a-s-t.net

We're still confused. Are you on the inside or the outside?

TRUST US

I was considering buying EA's *NASCAR REVOLUTION*, until I saw your review on it. You guys saved me some cash, I just wanted to say thanks.

Sincerely, C.Smith

You're welcome, C. Some people say we are too rough on bad games, but we know you guys would rather have the cold, hard truth than candy-coated lies. It's a matter of trust. (Not to mention we like to take out our pent-up sexual frustrations on these lowly, pitiful excuses for games.)

Gaming 411

These sponsors make it possible for **PC ACCELERATOR** to exist. Without them we'd just be a bunch of loud-mouthed fools. We appreciate their advertising, but if they make a game that sucks, we **WILL** kill it. Nobody owns **PCXL**, but **PCXL**.

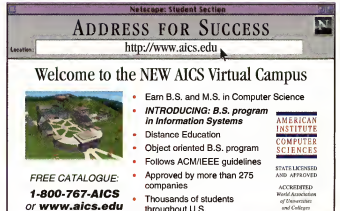
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Quake III: The Police Academy 4 of Games

I just finished playing the test demo of *Quake III* and I have to admit: I'm not that impressed. It's supposed to signal a new wave of deathmatch-only shooters, but from first impressions, the entire concept looks a little underwhelming. Despite the considerable hype of *Quake III* and its competitor/sister *Unreal Tournament*, both games seem like complete rehashes of their predecessors. Sure, the graphics are appropriately varnished and the gameplay concept slightly tweaked, but the core is about as fresh as George Carlin's "cutting edge" comedy.

I don't dispute how important these franchises have been in the past. I'm just saying that *Quake III* is to *Quake II* what *Police Academy 4* was to *Police Academy 3* (not much different, just a little prettier — thanks Sharon Stone). Like the star of those movies, *Quake*'s straightforward deathmatch is the Steve Guttenburg of videogames: Simple, fun for the masses, and harmless enough — but oh so utterly vapid.



If much work isn't done then *Quake III* could be the biggest disappointment since *Trespasser*.

The weapon lineup is the same as the one first introduced in *Wolfenstein 3D* and enhanced by the countless clones that have followed it. Some may call it balance, but after this many years, I call it stale. Even the basic gameplay is the same, with literally nothing added to the strategic level of the action (as if these shooters ever required much in the way of strategy to begin with).

When I can set up flanking fire and turrets for a flag raid in *Tribes*, protect an unarmed president in Capture the Flag, or frag my own squad in *Rainbow Six*, why should I get excited about random, brainless kills? I can get the same adrenaline rush in these other games, but with the added experience of teamwork and interaction that goes beyond the rocket launcher level. So why exactly are they bringing us the same exact gameplay we saw seven years ago?

Think of it this way: In the early days of cavemen, much fun was had running around hitting each other with clubs. But eventually man moved past that, joined teams, found more intriguing weapons, and evolved the concept of random clubbing to highly organized war. Without this progression, we would never have had the Crusades, World Wars I & II, or the 1995 Knicks/Bulls playoff series. Don't get me wrong: I love *Quake* and *Quake II* as much as the rest of the guys, but I think it's high time for computer games to move on as well.

– DAN "BUBBA SMITH" EGGER

SECOND PERSON

Dan, get off my crack pipe. What are you thinking? Get this: *Quake III*/*UT* = accessible, visceral, speedy, forceful and exhilarating. Those are concepts any moron (even you) can get into quickly and easily, and the primary reason that *Quake* is leading the charge of gaming as a professional sport. I wouldn't knock *Tribes* (too much) or *Rainbow Six*, but while they're first-person, the similarities end there. And, they ignore the pure rush that a frantic, highly skillful deathmatch offers.

There's something so very pure, so completely extravagant, so dominatingly infectious about being able to work on select hand-eye coordination skills against other people. Who is the fastest? The best mover? The most dominant strategist? Who commands levels the best? Who can use audio clues to know exactly where the other guy is, and to play the perfect game of cat and mouse?

That's what *Quake III* is all about — an uncomplicated, incredibly good looking, and admittedly dumb experience. Isn't that what everyone wants?

– ROB "THE ONE WHO KICKS DAN'S ASS AT *QUAKE* AND *QUAKE II*" SMITH

NEXT MONTH?

Bigger, Better, Faster Games for Girls

The Dreamy Guys of Games
John Romero, Dave Perry, Sid Meier, and John Carmack show up in our exclusive pictorial entitled "developers without any shirts." Read how Romero keeps his flowing locks so shiny, why the towering Perry doesn't mind dating short girls, and exactly where Carmack's superfluous third nipple really is.



Win a date with Mike
One lucky reader will win a date with **PCXL** Editor-in-Chief Mike Salmon. The lucky girl will experience a typical date with the boss: A touching foreign film, an expensive dinner at a French restaurant, hours of polite conversation, and finally a night of platonic cuddling.

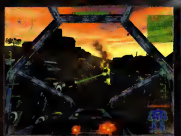
Barbie-Cosmo Slumber Party
Need a makeover? Well stop crying — the **PCXL** staff is here to help. We put the two top girl games to the test in the **PCXL** slumber party. And, witness the first-ever **PCXL** pillow fight, our version of Truth or Dare, and the ultimate gabfest, where we discuss the pros and cons of stuffing our bras.

Special Friends drop by
No slumber party would be complete without a few unexpected guests. Since this issue is for the girls, we want them to feel like a few friends will show up. Here are just three. Show up next month to see who else drops by.




Given a choice between
war and peace, the
answer is obvious...

PEACE IS



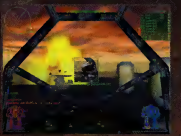
Use the Heads-Up-Display and View Points Monitor to track the war around you.



You choose the target. Destroy entire buildings and rain rubble down on unsuspecting enemies!



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35 weapons and a new targeting system let you pick away at enemy 'Mechs.

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